Belgium
and the Great Powers

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By Emile Waxweiler

Belgium Neutral and Loyal

Belgium and the Great Powers

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and

The Great Powers

Her Neutrality Explained and Vindicated

By

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PREFACE

Of the incidents which marked the beginning of the European War, none was certainly more unexpected than the press and pamphlet campaign organized in Germany against Belgium, as soon as the Belgian resistance became known.

A campaign of silence. The public was left in ignorance of all that would have represented Belgium's attitude in its true light. The communication to the press of the German Note of the 2d of August demanding passage through Belgian territory was delayed until the 8th of August. The Belgian Government's reply was not made known, even in the two official *White Books*. Although this reply was transmitted the very night of the 2d to the 3d of August, the truth is either simply denied, as in the following

words printed after the German Note: "This note remained unanswered" ("*auf diese Note erfolgte keine Antwort*"), (*Urkunden, Depeschen und Berichte der Frankfurter Zeitung*, p. 87), or a sheer falsehood is invented as in the statement: "To this Note, Belgium replied by a declaration of war" ("*Belgien antwortete darauf mit der Kriegserklärung*"), (*Die Wahrheit über den Krieg*, a pamphlet published by a group of Notables, p. 10).

A campaign of calumny. The Belgian population is "bloodthirsty" (official message to the President of the United States); the German civilians remaining in Belgium are being massacred; the German soldiers are being harried by an abominable civilian war of *francs-tireurs;* the wounded are being tortured. The Belgian Government is responsible for all these excesses; it has led the country into war by its adventurous and treacherous policy; it had long been bound to England and France and it had now handed Belgium over to these Powers, to help

them to carry out their hostile plans against Germany.

Belgium, at first astonished, defended herself: the Government, the authorities, the clergy, and political writers have patiently dealt with these imputations and have shown their absolute want of foundation.

It might have been supposed that the campaign would come to an end and that it had perhaps only been an effect of the feverish exaltation in the early days of the war.

Not at all. Hostility has not abated: distinguished university men have lent it their authority; administrative inquiries have been instituted; official publications and pamphlets of a semi-official character have been scattered broadcast in neutral countries.

In view of the persistency of these attacks, we have to ask ourselves whether we must leave the field to our accusers.

For a large number of people, Belgium no longer needs to be defended: their convictions

are steadfast. But for others whose scruples are more obstinate, or whose judgment has been taken unawares, silence might seem to give consent.

It is essential that Belgium should emerge from this struggle untarnished—that her name in history should be free from any slur.

The main charges which have of late been formulated against Belgium will, therefore, be discussed in the following pages. They may be classified, I think, under three principal indictments:

I.—"From the standpoint of wise policy Belgium's resistance is incomprehensible."

II.—"Belgium resisted because she was pledged."

III.—"Belgium was not called upon to resist, for her territory was not inviolable."

I shall examine the indictment from these three points of view, using documents and other first-hand evidence which in several cases have not yet been made public.

I have already, in a former publication (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*) undertaken to defend my country against the assaults of calumny. A year has passed: upon no point, however small, has it been possible to contradict the facts set forth in that work. What I have still to say is an addition to what I have already said, and neither corrects nor modifies it in any respect.

E. W.

March, 1916.

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Belgium and the Great Powers

CHAPTER I

"FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A WISE POLICY BELGIUM'S RESISTANCE IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE"

WHEN after carefully reading the various publications directed against Belgium's foreign policy, we seek a reason for the insistence which characterizes their indictment, we perceive that the basis of all these criticisms is a state of mind not uncommon in many neutral circles: one of profound astonishment, of baffled curiosity, which expresses itself thus: "How is it possible that Belgium, when requested by

Germany merely to allow her territory to be crossed, should not have seen her way to acquiesce? By resisting, Belgium adopted an attitude which, from the standpoint of wise policy, cannot really be justified."

When a wise policy obtains, it is explained, a State, which has attained maturity, no longer believes in chimeras. Will Belgium ingenuously maintain that she preserved a robust faith in international engagements sanctioned by treaties? But, it will be said, as for instance in the semi-official pamphlet, *Belgian Neutrality*, —printed at Berlin (Stilke) and widely circulated in all languages in neutral countries,—Belgium ought to have been the first to know that the very treaty which created her and which she is so fond of invoking, the neutralization treaty of 1839, had been discredited by a distinguished representative of the Power most interested in defending it. In 1870, on the occasion of the agreements concluded between England, on the one hand, and France and Germany on the

other, regarding the question of the violation of Belgian territory, Mr. Gladstone plainly declared in the House of Commons, invoking the authority of Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston: "Before binding its policy to a pledge of protection given to a third party, a country must have regard to the particular situation in which it finds itself at the moment when the pledge is called upon to come into effect." Such a declaration was well calculated to remind Belgium that treaties are only valid so far as political necessities, varying with times and circumstances, can be reconciled with them.

Or did Belgium honestly imagine that a State must aspire to a heroic line of action and sacrifice its well-considered interests to a theatrical attitude? But—we may read in the German Press and even in the neutral Press—a State is above all a concatenation of collective necessities; it is answerable to future generations for the discernment it shows, in grave emergencies, in distinguishing essential, dominant con-

siderations, from those which are ephemeral and episodical. Should the rulers of Belgium have indulged in diplomatic dialectics, when they found themselves violently hurled into the prologue of a drama in which the destiny of Europe was to be staked? Ought not foresight to have led them, if not to side with the neighbour whose power was, upon the whole, ensured against any lasting diminution of strength, at least to manage in such a way as to save appearances and spare the country the havoc of war?

All these reflections have been given special force by the events which have happened in the Balkans. An astonishing variety of arguments has been drawn from these.

Serbia, we are told, also preferred the "romantic" policy of alliance with the Entente to a "realistic" policy, and by a just turn of fortune, she has shared the fate of Belgium.

Bulgaria, on the other hand, subordinated every other consideration to the imperative

realization of claims which she knew how to place under the patronage of the whole of Europe.

Finally, Greece, who, solicited like Belgium, to maintain a "benevolent neutrality" towards certain Powers, manœuvres in such a way that, while not repulsing this invitation, she has not alienated the sympathies of the enemies of those who are pressing her.

And our critics proceed to generalize: the evolution of nations has its laws. In our epoch, it imposes upon the small States a political attitude which they can only avoid at the peril of their existence; too weak to hinder the inevitable consolidating movement of the great States, the small States must resolutely make a choice among the forces which will divide the world, and direct their policy in accordance with their choice. In the same way, in the economic evolution, small enterprises allow themselves to be polarized by great enterprises, and are satisfied with the autonomy which

they keep in a constellation of co-ordinated interests.

Briefly then, according to many, Belgium, in opposing the passage of the German troops across her territory, committed so flagrant a political mistake that it is not reasonably possible to impute it to her, and that her inconceivable attitude must be attributed to other causes. The explanation of Belgium's resistance by her supposed connivance with Germany's adversaries would thus acquire great plausibility.

. . . . . .

Now all these arguments are specious, for they leave the essential truths in obscurity.

Belgium would certainly be inexcusable, if she had subjugated her policy to some narrow and ostentatious diplomatic doctrinairism, if, in fact, she had acted from mere Quixotism. How different is the reality!

It is easy to assert, like Mr. Richard Grass-

hoff (*Belgium's Guilt: a Reply to Professor Waxweiler;* French Translation, Berlin, 1915, Reimer), that "the much disputed question of the violation of Belgian neutrality plays but a secondary part in the enquiry as to responsibility for the disastrous fate with which the War has afflicted Belgium . . . if nevertheless," he adds, "this question still assumes in the eyes of many persons, including Mr. Waxweiler, an importance that is quite out of date, it must be attributed to these two plausible motives: it is thought possible, by long dissertations upon a secondary subject, to divert public attention from the main object, and, by an unceasing hue and cry against Germany's treason, it is hoped to arouse universal commiseration and to win the sympathies of other peoples whose neutrality is guaranteed" (p. 6).

As a matter of fact, on the contrary, everything turns upon Belgian neutrality, and if the accusers of my country persist in discovering dishonest and perfidious motives in her acts,

it is because they do not wish to examine the question calmly and without prejudice.

On the night of the 2d of August, 1914, faced by Germany's threatening Note, Brussels did not need long hours of deliberation: there was no tergiversation, no hesitation. Bluff! say her accusers. Evidence of political continuity, reply those who know the history of Belgian neutrality since 1839.

For one has only to read this history to see that the resistance of 1914, dictated to the Belgians by a spontaneous sentiment of honour, was also the logical outcome of the whole tradition of their national policy; nay, more, that this policy was imposed by a clear consciousness of the only conditions under which Belgium could exist as an independent nation.

From the time when the European States were formed until the revolution of 1830, Belgium had been refused the right of existence. Although, according to Charles V., "the inhabitants of this country could not suffer the

government of foreigners," during long centuries they had not succeeded in liberating themselves from it: the rival appetites of the great Powers were too keen around their provinces, which unwearied toil persisted in enriching, in spite of the devastation of ever-recurrent wars. Independence was hard to conquer. But in the course of ceaseless struggles, Belgian nationality had undergone the strong tempering of time and, from the moment she was able to enjoy liberty, she found in herself an astonishing force of expansion.

This people had had neither the unifying force of a common language, nor the protection of geographical limits, nor the restraint of traditional authority to support its consolidation; it had buffeted through four centuries of foreign dominations and of revolts; Europe had granted it autonomy only while forcing it into isolation by the side of powerful and rival neighbours,—yet this people, once in control of its own destinies, gave itself institutions of

such a kind that, for two generations, they have been cited by other nations as models to imitate. It made the experiment of its contemporary constitutional liberties under the eyes—at first mocking, then surprised—of the friends of the Restoration, and this at a time when the great neighbouring countries were hardly attempting to practise a form of government which Belgium by its wisdom, its spirit of progress and of conservation, has helped to induce Europe to accept. At the same time this people had, when hardly constituted, to undergo, first among the nations on the Continent, the terrible social upheaval with which the new industrialism had already made England tremble. More densely concentrated upon its little piece of territory than all the other peoples of the world, it soon found itself face to face with all the problems of the democratic organization of the masses of today. And during these eighty-five years nothing has disturbed its cohesion or lessened its vigour.

We shall not be accused of lacking that modesty which becomes every patriot when we recall how often people came from abroad to study Belgian institutions, to watch the experiments of proportional representation, of the compulsory vote and the secret ballot, to observe the results of legislation upon workmen's dwellings, upon popular savings, and upon mutual aid. Many things were still imperfect, but how many others had, from the first, the mark of healthy originality!

In spite of all this, there has been an attempt among petty, pedantic, and impertinent persons in Germany to collect small facts tending to cast doubt upon the patriotism of the Belgians, nay, even upon the foundations of their nationality. Under cover of the silence to which opinion has been condemned in my country for the last eighteen months, they have thought that they could, without fear of reply, distort the facts by adducing fragmentary documents, by quoting authorities to whom Belgian public

opinion attached no weight whatever, and by setting up as judges, cranks who had never represented any feeling but their own. The Swiss Press has dealt so faithfully with the most contemptible of these pamphlets (*Belgian Neutrality and Swiss Neutrality*, by Eduard Blocher, Zürich and Geneva, 1915, in the series of *Stimmen im Sturm aus der deutschen Schweiz*) that I should be sorry to denounce them in any other way.

But I have the right to ask these men who write in the language which so many great minds have employed to build up history anew what they know themselves of the history of Belgium. They speak with disdain of the patriotic sense of the Belgians: which, among them, knows anything of the spirit which animated the Belgians from 1830 to 1880? Which of them was present at the great national commemorations of 1880 and of 1905? Which of them felt the thrill which ran through the crowd in the Place Poelaert at Brussels, on

the day of the festivities commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of Belgian Independence? Which of them has read the numerous collections in which all the representatives of Belgian thought, with one accord, recalled with suppressed pride what their country had become in seventy-five years and why they loved it? Which of them, lastly, was present at the *Joyeuse Entrée* of King Albert and Queen Elizabeth into all the Belgian towns and understood a unity so spontaneous and so complete that the red flag unfurled itself frankly side by side with the tricolour?

It is hard to conceal our contempt for their efforts to deny to neutral countries the greatest factor in the whole history of Belgium: the will to live.

The will of the nation to live: this has been the directing force of Belgium's foreign policy.

As my Brussels colleague, Professor Nys, recalled, fifteen years ago, in the *Revue de Droit International* (volume xxxii., p. 608):

"Belgium had herself acquired and asserted her independence, and therefore the fact that she is a State was by no means the result of a gracious act on the part of the Powers. She existed as a Sovereign State when the 'Belgian question' came before the European Concert. . . . The sovereignty of a State and its independence, the consequence of this sovereignty, in no way depend upon the good pleasure of the other States and have no need to be recognized by the latter." Taking its stand in this way upon elements which had a sound natural basis, the foreign policy of Belgium applied itself to safeguarding the right of the nation to exist.

Now from the first days of the reign of Leopold I., the Sovereign and his Government had to impress upon their minds this dominating fact: if they wanted to guarantee the life of the country, it was necessary to give it a clearly independent position with regard to the three Powers whose proximity surrounded it with jealous influences. For Belgium the first con-

dition of life was the balance of power, not so much, say, neutrality, the formula of doctrine, as equilibrium, the rule of action. Every tendency to favour one of the Powers at the expense of the other two inclined public opinion, by virtue of a true collective intuition, in the contrary direction; every blow struck by one of the Powers at the national sovereignty led to a clear understanding with the others. In the same way, a mechanical system resting on three supports one of which should happen to give way, would only be maintained if it righted itself in the direction of the other two.

The external danger was unceasing. The Powers were on the watch for the slightest sign of solicitude or of hostility of which Belgium might be the object; what is more, to this reciprocal distrust was often added the undisguised intention of striking a blow at the autonomy of the country. It was only by vigilant firmness that the Belgian Government succeeded in escaping such perils. In 1840 already, King

Leopold I., in a speech addressed to the Senate, formulated the maxim which was to sum up the whole of Belgian policy, in its combined prudence and energy: "To maintain a sincere, loyal, and strong neutrality must be our constant aim." It was in similar terms that, twenty-six years later, on the morrow of the European crisis of 1866, his successor, Leopold II., expressed himself at the opening of the legislative session: "In the midst," said the King, "of the grave events which have troubled a great part of Europe, Belgium has remained calm, confident, and deeply impressed with the rights and duties of a neutrality which she will maintain in the future as in the past, sincere, loyal, and strong."

But even this extremely correct policy aroused suspicion. "Neutrality is not impotence," the Minister of Foreign Affairs had written in 1840, in a diplomatic circular in which he laid down principles of foreign policy; "if events require it, Belgium will take such precautions

as care for her safety dictates." This sufficed to arouse alarm in Berlin and Vienna; if Belgium spoke in this way, it must be because she shared France's warlike designs. "The system," says a confidential memorandum, "is carried so far as to consider all armament in Belgium as a violation of her neutrality."

Or again it was upon economic ground that antagonisms came to light: since 1836, attempts had been made to induce Belgium to conclude a commercial union with the French monarchy. Belgium resisted. In order to force her consent, a tariff war was undertaken against her; the other guaranteeing Powers, upon England's intervention, then upheld the young kingdom and declared, notably in opposition to Guizot, that any commercial fusion was contrary to neutrality.

A few years later, in 1848, it was Republican France, which, breaking with Lamartine's pacific attitude, manifested a very hostile frame of mind towards Belgium. The Belgian Govern-

ment immediately sounded the other foreign Cabinets, and Lord Palmerston on this occasion made a declaration which, indeed, is not without a bearing upon present events; the Powers, he said, had not only the right, but also the obligation to guarantee the independence of Belgium, and this obligation implied according to him the general duty: 1st, of aiding by all means the party wronged by the aggression of a foreign Power; 2d, to preserve for it or to cause to be restored to it the territorial possession thus safeguarded.

It was at this time that the Belgian authorities stopped at the frontier a band of French revolutionaries who attempted to penetrate into their territory—though this did not prevent Belgium, hospitable to the defenders of liberal institutions, from giving refuge some time later to the exiles of the Second Empire.

We will not dwell upon the susceptibilities aroused in 1855 by the organization of the defence of the country and the construction

of the entrenched camp of Antwerp, nor upon the solicitations to which Belgium was subjected during the Crimean War. It was after 1866 that the incidents took place which best show to what an extent Belgium had always to pursue a policy of action and of safeguard, very foreign to all diplomatic ideology. Although the scope of the secret negotiations begun by Napoleon III. with Bismarck with a view to the eventual annexation of Belgium by France was not exactly known in Brussels, the Belgian Government had received information of a grave character. Soon, a diplomatic circular of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs *ad interim*, the Marquis de la Valette, raised anxiety to the highest pitch: this document set forth nothing more nor less than the theory of the elimination of the small States for the benefit of the great States, and it announced, besides, a military reorganization which gave a crowning significance to this manifesto. A characteristic fact and one which well reveals the hypo-

critical ambitions of which the Belgian Government had to keep track unceasingly, was that the appearance of the French circular coincided with a campaign in the German semi-official Press, notably in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, against Belgium. Threatened on both sides, public opinion in the country turned instinctively towards the third guarantor: a delegation of English volunteers was invited to Brussels, and was warmly welcomed by the population. The English Press, without distinction of party, took up the quarrel of Belgium, and denounced the hidden conspiracy which was being hatched against her.

In 1867 there were fresh alarms. First of all, the fate of the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg, which was discussed in an international conference, resembling as it did that of Belgium at so many points, gave a fresh stimulus to the cupidity of foreign Powers. By the dignified policy which it adopted, the Belgian Government secured the confidence of Europe.

This question had hardly been settled, when the French Empire attempted to lay its hands upon important railway lines in the country: it was an obvious attack upon national sovereignty. But the tenacious ability of a politician who was destined to become a statesman, M. Frère-Orban, succeeded in bringing long and difficult negotiations in Paris to a successful issue.

Next it was 1870—which offers so many analogies with the present situation.

It has not been sufficiently noticed, for instance, that if England then thought it her duty to ask of France and Prussia a special engagement to respect Belgian territory, it was for reasons very similar to those which determined her action in the present conflict. On the 3d of August, 1914, England had known for six days Germany's intentions with regard to Belgium; in the historic conversation of the 29th of July, which remains for the Belgians the crucial date, it had been said that Belgium

would only preserve her integrity if she allowed the German army to pass; as to her independence, no mention was made of it (see in *La Belgique neutre et loyale*, pp.111 to 117 and 122–123, the gradual increase of the bidding made at Belgium's expense in the terms offered to England as the price of her abstention between the 29th of July and the 4th of August). In like manner in 1870, England had just become aware of the secret negotiation between Napoleon III. and Bismarck, and it was the feeling stirred up by this revelation which decided public opinion; the discussions in the British Parliament bear witness to it. "It is impossible," said Lord Russell in the House of Lords, on the 2d of August, 1870, "not to be anxious for the future when we see that in 1866, and in still more recent times, the Prime Minister of Prussia, and the Ambassador, initiated into the thoughts of the Emperor of the French, deliberated together in order to violate the treaty of 1831, trample public faith under foot, and annihilate

the independence of Belgium. Belgium has attacked nobody. It is a prosperous kingdom, in possession of free institutions, and although there have been conflicts from time to time, such as those in connection with the railways and other matters of slight importance, I have never heard it denied that under the late King Leopold, a very wise and intelligent monarch, as under the present King, Belgium has maintained friendly relations with all the other States, guarding her own independence and wronging no other country. It is therefore an extraordinary discovery to learn that the independence of this State has been the subject of negotiations between other Powers. . . . We are bound to defend Belgium."

I do not wish to linger further over this suggestive parallel between 1870 and 1914, but it is necessary to note in passing that from the moment when England's attitude became clear, Belgium was in a position to know the reasons upon which it was founded. Disraeli had taken

care to recall that the obligation to defend Belgium took its rise in the best established interests of English policy: "The treaty of 1839," explained the orator, "was concluded in the general interest of Europe, but with a very clear notion of the importance of its provisions for England. It was a permanent principle of the policy of this country that England's interest required that the lands situated along the coast of the Continent, from Dunkirk to Ostend, and as far as the islands of the North Sea, should be possessed by free and prosperous States, practising the arts of peace, enjoying the rights of liberty, applying themselves to the operations of commerce, which promote the interests of general civilization, and that these lands should not belong to a great military Power, which, by the conditions of its existence, must tend towards exercising a preponderating influence in Europe."

The Belgian Government was not blind to these signs. Belgium, negotiating directly with

France and with Germany, obtained their pledges to respect her neutrality—"a superfluous declaration, in view of the treaties in force," wrote Bismarck to the Belgian Minister on the 22d of July.

In this grave crisis again, Belgian policy kept in close contact with realities; it did not delude itself; it knew that the autonomous existence of the country rested upon a neutralization of interests. Nay, more; with its eyes fixed upon the future it took care to point out publicly the significance of recent events: on the 16th of August, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. d'Anethan, communicated to Parliament the text of the agreements signed by France and by Prussia with England and thus defined their scope: "The identical and separate treaties," he said, "concluded by England with the two Powers at war, neither create nor modify the obligations resulting from the treaty of 1839; they settle the practical method of execution of these obligations in view of any

particular case; they do not invalidate in any way the engagements of the other guaranteeing powers, and as their texts bear witness, they leave unaltered for the future the obligatory character of the preceding treaty with all its consequences."[1]

[1] It will be remarked in passing how completely these formal declarations annihilate the thesis of certain accusers who maintain that in 1914 Belgium was no longer guaranteed by the initial treaty of 1839, because, according to them, it had been nullified by those of 1870. (See, for instance, Frans Kolbe, in *Das Grössere Deutschland*, No. 5, 30th January, 1915; Professor John W. Burgess, *Der Europäische Krieg*, Hirzel, Leipzig, Kap. vi., pp. 135–193; and Dr. R. Pattai, *Wiener Deutsches Volksblatt*, 11th of October, 1914. *Contra:* "Documentary Note-books," B.D.B., Le Havre, Note No. 40.)

Further the text of the double treaty of 1870 is categorical, and we can only suppose that those who have defended the thesis of which I speak had not read it:

"H. M. the Queen of the United Kingdom . . . and H. M. . . ., desiring at the present time to record in a solemn act their fixed determination to maintain the independence and the neutrality of Belgium established by Art. 7 of the treaty signed at London on the 19th of April, 1839, between Belgium and the Netherlands, which article has been declared by the quintuple Treaty of 1839 to have the same force and the same validity as if it were textually inserted in the said quintuple Treaty, the said Majesties have resolved to conclude between them a separate Treaty which, *without invalidating or impairing the conditions of the quintuple Treaty aforesaid, will be subsidiary and accessory to it.*"

Since 1870, Belgian policy has not been able to relax its vigilance or its activity: alternations of malevolence and of sympathy have succeeded each other almost without interruption.

Already during the war, Germany showed her ill-humour in connection with the attitude of a part of the Belgian Press, which she considered too sympathetic towards France; this called forth a very clear declaration from the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Senate. "It would," he said, "be supremely unjust to make either the nation or the Government responsible for certain newspaper articles." "A short time afterwards," states M. Banning in a confidential memorandum, to which his high office in the Department of Foreign Affairs

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"ART. 3.—This Treaty will be obligatory for the contracting High Parties for the duration of the present war between France and the North German Confederation and its allies, and for twelve months after the ratification of the treaty of peace concluded between the belligerents, and at the *expiration of this period, the independence and the neutrality of Belgium will continue, in as far as the contracting High Parties are concerned, to rest as until now upon Art. 1 of the quintuple Treaty of the 14th of April, 1839.*"

at Brussels gave exceptional authority, "the Peace of Versailles brought about a momentary calm. But as early as 1872, recriminations began again. It was in the spring of 1875 that hostile manifestations reached their climax; Germany was then upon the point of resuming the struggle against France; but the Emperor of Russia imposed peace (May, 1875). The storm artificially raised against Belgium subsided immediately: it had lost its object."

From 1888 to 1891, it was in France that a press campaign was organized against Belgium; the publication of documents purloined at Brussels and the commentaries which accompanied them, notably in the *Nouvelle Revue*, led the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs to vouch in Parliament for the absolute straightforwardness of Belgian policy, "which," he said, "respects the duties of neutrality to the point of scrupulousness." Nevertheless, a pamphlet entitled *Belgium Sold to Germany* reproached the Belgian Government, among

many other things, with having abstained from sending official representatives to the Paris Exhibition, and with persisting in ordering its cannons from the Krupp establishments (p. 200); on the 8th of August, 1890, the *Figaro* went so far as to write: "We must henceforth consider Belgium no longer as a neutral State, but really as a German province." After a short lapse of time, the Government, by the anxiety it showed to maintain the international position of the country, dissipated all prejudices and silenced calumny.

From about 1895 onward it was from England that the clouds came: already in 1887, Sir Charles Dilke had written in a political study published in the *Fortnightly Review* that "the affairs of the Congo had been singularly prejudicial to Belgium in the mind of the English nation" (*Europe in 1887*, p. 49). An article in the *Standard* of the 4th of February, 1887, which finds unexpected favour today among the newspapers and publicists of Germany,

had set forth views which were, in truth, hardly favourable to Belgian neutrality, but which merely expressed a private opinion, and not, as the German Press would have us believe, the sentiments of the English Government. Soon, the English campaign against the administration of the Congo Free State before the annexation by Belgium provoked strong protestations from Belgian opinion; political relations were affected by them. In his speech on the occasion of his accession to the throne, in December, 1909, King Albert made a declaration on the subject of the introduction of reforms in the Congo by the Belgian Government, the import of which was very clear to all: "When Belgium enters into an engagement," he declared, "no one has the right to doubt her word."

But we have now arrived at the very period in which critics of Belgian policy persist in multiplying their charges. I will deal with them in a special part of this study (see Chapter II., p. 44 *et seq.*).

This rapid summary should suffice to show to what an extent public feeling, guided by an instinctive sense of necessity, has, since the first years of Belgian independence, habitually turned against the neighbour, whoever he might be, who betrayed a disposition to interfere or dominate. Bluster, threats, indiscreet sympathies, malevolent interpretations, immediately revived the rebellious spirit ever latent in the Belgian people. This psychology of the nation fully explains the vogue enjoyed for a certain time by the project of a closer understanding with Holland; there would perhaps be less cause for anxiety, if we were two instead of one to face a common danger.

One fact becomes very clear to us, namely that the resolution of the 2d of August, 1914, has taken its place as a link in an unbroken chain of political decisions.

For eighty-four years Belgium had been pursuing a policy of rare steadfastness. This policy was simply the outcome of the national

will to live: "Everything comes into being and perishes with our independence," King Leopold had said in 1887, when inaugurating, at Bruges, the monument to the memory of the Flemish *Communiers*. We were neutral, not only because we meant to remain faithful to the engagement entered into with Europe, which, in 1830, had made neutrality the condition of liberty, but because, if we wanted to live, we had to remain what we were. It was a reason stronger than any which could be drawn from the casuistry of international conventions,—and it is this reason which seems to elude Belgium's critics; not seeing it, they do not see that for no country is the obligation to yield to no foreign influence bound up, as it is for Belgium, with the very conditions of its political formation and of its development as a State.

The situation may be summed up in two words: since 1830 Belgium's foreign policy has consisted of this elementary program: No infeodation,—no infeodation of any sort or

kind, whether political, economic, or colonial; no infeodation, either in the realm of language or in that of thought: the national interest pure and simple. The man in the street would have found himself in agreement with the Government as to that program, for it came from the very soul of the people. It has been energetically reiterated in the recent manifesto by which the most influential personalities of the Flemish movement have replied to the solicitations addressed to them by the Germans in occupied Belgium: *Wij willen in geene afhankelijkheid leven van eenige vreemde mogendheid* ("We do not desire to live as the dependants of any foreign Power whatever").

To a people whose policy had been so determined, so consistent, and so clearly defined, and from its earliest beginnings had remained so unswervingly true to itself, the demand for passage from the German armies could make no difference. Let us imagine this demand—even unaccompanied by the fatal threat which

offered the country the alternative of yielding or of losing its independence—let us imagine it addressed to the Belgians of 1840, of 1848, of 1856, of 1866, of 1870: what reply would they have given?

Refusal.

Refusal—not dictated by martial romanticism, nor the bigotry of diplomatic fictions, but—apart from any consideration of fidelity to treaties—by the fact that acquiescence would have meant infeodation—before, during, and after the war: there are acts of compliance which prepare the way for servitude.

Refusal: dictated by necessity.

For in the case of Belgium necessity imposed a law, *Not kannte kein Gebot:* not a necessity of strategic convenience, but a necessity bound up with the very existence of the nation, and with the cardinal principle of abandoning nothing of its personality to one or other of the three neighbouring Powers.

Belgium had so clear a consciousness of this

that, in her reply to the German Note of the 2d of August, she formulated the declaration by which again, at this supreme hour, she expressed her will to be independent: "If, contrary to our expectation, a violation of Belgian neutrality should be committed by France, Belgium would fulfil all her international obligations, and her army would offer the most vigorous resistance to the invader."

The opinion recently expressed to me by the Director of the Foreign Affairs of Belgium is even more definite in this connection: "Never for an instant, he told me, did we think that, in a European conflagration in which our neutrality would be violated, we should be able to choose our allies."

Have I now made it clear how completely Belgium, guided in her decision on the 2d of August, 1914, by respect for her pledged word to the Powers in 1830, and taking her stand, without weighing the respective chances of the adversaries, on the side to which Right

called her, was at the same time serving her most vital interests?

She might, it is often said (see, for the latest expression of this opinion, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 23d of February, 1916, No. 53), have yielded in the middle of August, 1914, when Germany renewed her demand. As if to open her territory at this moment to one of the guarantors would not have been, in fact, to side with that guarantor, to the detriment of the other two! As if to accept a compromise after fifteen days of a war marked by inhuman and undeserved reprisals, would not have been an outrage to public feeling and an evidence of the worst of infeodations!

. . . . . .

What remains, in view of all this, of the analogies between the position of Belgium and that of certain Balkan States, which the German press and, to some extent, the neutral press have multiplied since last October with undisguised satisfaction?

When the *Berne Tageblatt* reverts (for example, Nos. for the 9th October and 7th December, 1915) to the misfortunes of Belgium and of Serbia, it attacks not only the great Powers of the Entente, but also the two small nations. I confine myself deliberately to the defence of Belgium's policy, and consequently I refrain from the consideration of events in the Balkans save in so far as they bear upon this defence. Now, according to the *Berne Tageblatt*, the lesson they offer is that a small people must think twice before making its existence dependent upon the intervention of a great Power. "Belgium listened to England and France, just as Serbia followed Russia; Belgium decided to resist only in the absolute conviction that she would receive sufficient aid from the Entente."

This statement contradicts one of the facts most solidly established by the Belgian *Grey Book:* it had already been put forward in the letter which thirty-one German Professors

sent to the English Universities on the 7th of September, 1914, and in calling attention to this manifesto I pointed out how completely my German colleagues were mistaken.

"The Belgians," I said, "resisted the German invasion, irrespective of England's willingness or unwillingness to intervene. The appeal of the King for the diplomatic intervention of the English Government was made after the refusal of the proposition of August 2d had been notified to Germany. The appeal of the Government for the military co-operation of the English, French, and Russian forces was made after the violation of Belgian territory, when the Belgian Army was already fighting.[1] And I know on

[1] Since the opportunity is offered me, I should like to correct a rather widespread error on the subject of the military intervention of France. There has been frequent reference to the refusal which the Belgian Government is said to have made to a French offer to send five army corps to the help of Belgium threatened by the German Note. It is officially established, on the one hand, that the French Minister only made the communication given in the first *Grey Book* (see notably No. 24); on the other hand, that the French military *attaché* only spoke to the Minister of War of help in principle, which the Belgian Government was only prepared to accept

good authority—I give my word of honour as to this—that at that moment there was deep anxiety in the ruling spheres of Belgium, when men asked each other what would be the reply from London." (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 173.)

A comparison between the attitude of Belgium and that of Serbia is in fact irrevelant: Serbia's status authorized her to pursue the policy which suited her. Belgium was bound, obliged, compelled, by the constitution which Europe had imposed upon her as the condition of her independence, not only to resist on the very day when her frontier was violated, but also to act in concert with those of her guarantors who had remained faithful to her.

The contrast which some have attempted to establish between the attitude of Belgium and that of Greece rests on no better foundation.

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after the violation of territory; nothing was ever specified on the subject; no mention of the nature and the strength of this help was ever made.

In a press communication (25th of November, 1915), in which the Wolff Agency—quite erroneously, as the *Social Demokraten* of the 26th of December pointed out—claimed to see a reflection of public feeling in Denmark, the King of the Belgians was contrasted with the King of Greece: the latter, it was said, had used his influence to preserve his country from the calamities of war; the former, on the other hand, had thrown his sword into the balance and thus called down upon his people the fate which overwhelms them. Can any one fail to see, however, that nothing in the two situations offers a ground of comparison?

Belgium, in 1914, on the eve of a conflict which was about to engage her neighbours, who were at the same time her guarantors, in a deadly struggle, was summoned by one of them, at the price of the loss of her liberty, to revoke her engagements with the others. Since her foundation as a State, the whole of her policy, springing from the very necessities of existence,

had aimed solely at escaping subjection. Challenged quite unexpectedly, when contrary assurances had been lavished upon her a few hours previously, she had one night to make her decision. If she had acquiesced, she would have not only destroyed all her past, but she would also have added to the incredibility of such an action all the obloquy which overwhelms those who fail in their obligations. No people, nc man could have hesitated.

Greece, in 1915, in the midst of a war whose events hitherto had taken place far from her frontiers, received from the three Powers which, alone in Europe, had, since her regeneration, helped her to conquer and to keep her independence, a request to allow the troops of these Powers to cross her territory in order to go to the assistance of her own ally. Her Government had had leisure to reflect for many long months; it had first of all taken up a position favourable to the interests of the said Powers and consistent with national tradition;

it was bound by no treaty; it remained, within the limits marked out by gratitude and coherence of conduct, supreme master and judge of its interests. It made up its mind and assumed its responsibilities.

Where can we find the slightest analogy? Professor Schweizer, of Zürich, in an article upon the benevolent neutrality of Greece compared with the neutrality of Switzerland (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 26–27 November, 1915), has lucidly shown that the right of passage is absolutely incompatible with permanent neutrality and that Germany's request, on the 2d of August, 1914, was equivalent to transforming Belgium, a neutralized territory, into a base for offensive operations against France.

As to whether the evolution of political forms in contemporary States necessitates the absorption of the small ones by the great, a discussion upon such a question could be useful only in less unfavourable circumstances. Besides, the contemporary State is being formed under our

eyes, just as different from what it was less than a century ago as from what it was thought that it would be; we can hardly foretell what will be its dominant traits.

But one thing is certain: it is that men united together in nations will never place commercial calculations above the sentiment which they have for their common existence. Perhaps a small State would derive some economic advantage from being absorbed by a great State. But the citizens of a State are moved by aspirations which have no concern with questions of revenue and expenditure, and history is made up of the conflicts which arise from the divergency of these aspirations the very nobility of which makes it impossible to restrict them.

CHAPTER II

"BELGIUM RESISTED BECAUSE SHE WAS ALREADY PLEDGED"

On the 13th of October, 1914, fifteen months ago, the accusation was first made that the Belgian Government had been guilty of a grave violation of the obligations imposed upon it by its situation as a neutral State. The accusation claimed to be founded "on documents proving Belgium's connivance (*die belgische Konnivenz*) with the Powers of the Entente, a fact which, it was stated, had indeed been already known for a long time before the war in well-informed circles in Germany" (*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13th October, 1914).

Since that moment, probably not a week has

passed without a repetition of the accusation in some form or other, in a book, a pamphlet, a newspaper, a speech, or an interview. The collection of documents which I have gathered together from day to day has gone on increasing, and it is really not without interest to see how a belief gains a hold upon public opinion.

Again today when Germans address neutral countries they will say, for instance, without embarrassment, as if dealing with a universally accepted fact: "Neutral Holland will never suffer the fate of her neighbour of the South, guilty Belgium, who violated her own neutrality . . . (*des neuträlitatsbrüchigen und schuldigen Belgiens*). If Belgium had followed the policy of strict and loyal neutrality which Holland observes, if she had not let herself be taken in by England, and if she had not prepared plans against Germany in concert with England, she would be today in a situation similar to that of Holland" (*Germania*, 23 September, 1915).

Or again, in a letter accompanying documents sent to the Swiss newspapers, the German Minister at Berne writes: "Belgium had indeed long been under the influence of France and of the Entente" (*Journal de Jura*, 15 September, 1915).

Or yet again, speaking to a representative of the Associated Press of the United States, Secretary of State von Jagow explains that "the Belgian Government, encouraged by England, and in fact, under the military domination of this Power, plunged its country into war" (*Lokal Anzeiger*, 16 October, 1915).

It is not without interest to scrutinize the methods by means of which the accusers of Belgium have thus been able to wrest the facts from their natural interpretation and obscure the legitimacy of Belgium's action.

In the first place, they attach no value to denials, however solemn they may be. The Belgian Government, for instance, tired of seeing the same groundless imputations un-

ceasingly renewed, has made the following declaration, which it bases upon facts: "The Belgian Government declares upon its honour that not only was no agreement concluded, but also that there never were either negotiations or propositions on the subject of such an agreement on the part of any Belgian Government. . . . All the Belgian Ministers, without exception, will vouch for this upon oath: no conclusion whatever arising out of these conversations was proposed either to the Council Ministers or to any individual Minister" (*Grey Book*, ii., No. 103, Annex, p. 106). To this the semi-official newspaper of the German Empire, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, confines itself to replying: "The Belgian Government wishes, by a declaration on its honour, to suppress compromising documents which exist. It denies that an agreement was ever concluded with any government, or that even *pourparlers* or negotiations ever took place. This declaration upon its honour is really too

artless for any one to credit in view of the crushing proofs furnished by documents." (No. for the 10th March, 1915.)

Of the fundamental object of the discussion, namely, the obvious distinction to be made on the one hand between a so-called convention binding the Belgian Government to the British Government, and infeoffing Belgium to the policy of the Entente, and on the other hand, conversations between military men anxious to safeguard Belgian neutrality in accordance with treaties and precedents, on the dreaded hypothesis (which was in fact realized in 1914), that this neutrality would be first violated by Germany,—of this, the one important point to be considered, we hear not a word. But the desired impression is made upon the reader: "The Belgian Government impudently denies established facts," so that it was further possible to print, in an official note sent from Berlin on the 6th of August last, to the international press: "The military connivance of Belgium

with England and France is so irrefutably established by documents . . . that it would be superfluous to say another word on this subject."

To discover the origin and follow the trajectory of these persistent trains of calumny, a laborious patience to which the subject does not readily lend itself would be necessary; but when such a task is undertaken the result always repays the toil of research. The Bureau Documentaire Belge (B.D.B), set up at Havre, has thus traced (in Note No. 136) the successive versions of the following piece of information published on the 26th of August last by the Wolff Agency in Germany, in Austria-Hungary, and in all the neutral countries.

"The following very interesting and very characteristic incident has been communicated to us from an important source:

"At the Dutch Consulate of a large Swiss town, a man returning from France presented himself, wishing to go to Belgium and soliciting

a Dutch passport. It was soon proved that the applicant was not Dutch, but Belgian. Among the documents offered for identification purposes, there was, by chance, a small pamphlet destined, according to its title, for Belgian soldiers. It contained sketches of various French uniforms, bore the title: 'Our Allies,' and the date of publication, July, 1914. The story is absolutely authentic, and the persons who brought it to our notice are ready to guarantee its authenticity with their names."

This account was in fact merely a slightly modified version of a piece of information which appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* of the 28th of August, 1914, No. 967, under the heading of *Ein Beweis* ("A Proof"). Under its new form it made the round of the press, and commentaries were not wanting. Now the Dutch Consul concerned sent a decisive rectification in the following terms to a Bâle newspaper, the *Basler Anzeiger*, on the 7th of September.

"As the affair gives rise to all sorts of consid-

erations, the Consulate in question points out to us that it attaches no importance to the account of this Belgian, who, wishing in the first place to claim another nationality, was obviously indifferent to truth, and that this story has been given, erroneously and progressively, an importance which it evidently does not deserve. It is an example of the birth of unfounded rumours."

Neither the Wolff Agency nor any of the newspapers which had inserted its information published the contradiction. What is more, three weeks later, the *Berliner Tageblatt* (29th September, 1915, morning edition) again served up the original story. Better still, the B.D.B., on the 12th of October last, published information derived from official sources which proved, with irrefutable precision, that the only document reproducing foreign military uniforms distributed in Belgium on the occasion of the war was made up, but not yet placed in circulation, on the *6th of August, 1914, that is to say*

four days after the receipt of the German Note. So far, not one of the numerous journals which adopted the error has devoted a single line to the truth.

I have said that one of the first methods of confusing public opinion consisted in ignoring or denying contradictions. Another very favourite proceeding is to mix up in one account testimonies of weight with worthless presumptions, to intersperse flimsy data among demonstrable facts until it becomes impossible to disentangle the thread of reality.

One of the most fertile applications of this method is to be found in the imputations which aim particularly at discrediting the policy of the Belgian Government; a few facts of an official character are intermingled with a large number of newspaper cuttings, extracts from unofficial speeches, impressions or anecdotes, which are supposed to give a picture of the state of opinion in the country. In general, moreover, this opinion is represented as hostile

to Germany, for the point to be established is that even before the war a systematic hostility to her existed. Sometimes, however, we come across the contrary thesis, as, for instance, in the *Schlesische Volkszeitung* of the 17th of August, 1915, where in an attempt to undermine French influence, it is explained that before the war a large part of the Belgian population got on very well with the Germans, who had won their genuine affection. The contradiction between the two assertions is of very slight importance; the different articles reach different readers.

In like manner it is by means of a truly alchemical combination of documents that the author of the pamphlet *Belgian Neutrality and Swiss Neutrality* (p. 17)—which I have already touched upon—manages to bolster up a conclusion thus formulated; if Germany requested to be allowed to pass through Belgium, it was because she had lost all confidence in that country, and would never have risked

relying upon her neutrality to ensure the safety of her rich Rhine Provinces; on the other hand, Germany had absolute confidence in Switzerland, because Switzerland was practising neutrality in a loyal manner; so Germany respected Switzerland while she violated the territory of Belgium (pp. 29–30 of the German edition, page 32 of the French edition). And this conclusion rests upon the exposition of a series of facts which claim to give evidence of public feeling in Belgium, but which, being really worthless in themselves, do not warrant any generalization concerning Belgian foreign policy. For instance, the author quotes insistently from a pamphlet which ought to have appeared suspect to him, since it bore no name to guarantee its contents; or he writes (I underline), "*In Belgium they even went as far as to participate in France's armament.* In 1912 when a national subscription was opened in France for the benefit of military aviation, no hesitation was felt in extending the movement to Belgium" (p. 30

of the French edition). As a fact, the matter had never gone beyond an indiscreet proposal, made in non-representative circles, and a Ghent newspaper whose tendencies were by no means violently Flemish, exclaimed on this occasion: "Are we quite mad? and is it really necessary to point out that these aeroplanes might be called upon to hover threateningly over Belgian soil?" The author knew this, for he felt bound to reprint it, but that did not prevent him from concluding with assurance: "What could be expected of *a country whose population offers aeroplanes to the French Army?*" (p. 29 of the German edition, a passage not reproduced in the French edition).

I could here reproduce numerous extracts from the German press and from pamphlets destined for neutrals, in which futile incidents or discredited personalities are invoked. To give but one further example, I will say what must be thought of a certain Major Girard, whose opinion our accusers delight to reproduce:

Mr. Girard no longer belongs to the Belgian Army: twenty-five years before the war, he had already been unanimously stigmatized in Parliament, and, in August, 1891, a newspaper reproduced the opinion of a former member of the Government concerning him: "Major Girard" it said, "is carrying on an absolutely anti-patriotic campaign, unworthy of an ex-officer." But what can the neutrals know of all this? They retain only one thing: that a "Belgian Major" has ideas favourable to certain German theses.

Such methods discredit a controversy. It is particularly to be regretted that we find them in writings upon which the position of their authors appears to bestow the prestige due to scientific work.

Thus, Professor Karl Hampe, of Heidelberg, mars a study impartial in tone (*Belgiens Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Teubner, Leipzig und Berlin, 1915) by giving, in his IXth chapter (pp. 77 *et seq.*), a mosaic of quotations of

very unequal value, in order to prove that, during the last few years, the directing circles in Belgium had, like the Government, sided with France against Germany: of what value are these second-hand cuttings in the eyes of all who know the enlightened opinion of the country from having observed and measured its currents?

In the same way, Professor Reinhard Frank of Munich (*Die belgische Neutralität*, Mohr, Tübingen, 1915, p. 19 *et seq.*) and his colleague Aloys Schulte of Bonn (*Von der Neutralität Belgiens*, Marcus und Weber, Bonn, 1915, p. 94 *et seq.*) attempt to show that an evolution had taken place in the course of the last few years, in official spheres and in influential circles in Belgium, as to the obligations imposed by neutrality. The opinions quoted, very few in number, are those of publicists, that is to say of private individuals, neither directly nor indirectly representative of the Government. My colleagues will recognize that to transpose

facts and assertions in this way from the private to the public domain, is to deprive an historical exposition of all its value. These dangerous methods, which entirely set aside the principles of sound criticism, lead to declarations like the following: "[In Belgium] *everything was prepared* in the minds of the jurists, the soldiers—and *doubtless* also of the politicians—to enable them to look upon conspiracies with France and England as compatible with neutrality." Now, this grave assertion of Professor R. Frank's (p. 26) rests upon two quotations, neither more nor less.

Again, we find Professor Schulte making this remarkable series of specious inferences (p. 103): "*Certainly the Belgian Government did not put forward this point of view, but* . . . what men like these [General Brialmont and Professor Nys] say, is not effaced, but grows, on the contrary, in people's hearts. . . . The fiery Walloon (Brialmont) was among the most ardent friends of France. *In the Belgian Army* the

partisans of the French Alliance were quite predominant. They finally triumphed also —*at least so it appears*—at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

Or again, the same Professor Schulte, slipping surreptitiously into a phrase an incident which suggests certain ideas and tends to pervert the judgment, cries in speaking of the port of Zeebrugge (p. 86): "England cannot come to Antwerp by sea: but Belgium constructed, for commercial purposes, the port of Zeebrugge; *this port is moreover also suitable for a base of disembarkation for the* English, and it was used for this purpose in the autumn of 1914."

Pascal loved to scourge dialecticians of this kind.

So much for the methods of the Prosecution.

The facts to which it appeals are well-known: no fresh facts have been brought forward for a year, but the old ones are resuscitated with different readings.

I will confine myself to utilizing here the most official of German documents, the last edition of the *White Book* devoted to the war: *Aktenstücke zum Kreigsausbruch herausgegeben vom Auswärtigen Amte*, published about April, 1915. At this date it was still considered opportune to devote a third of the seventy-five pages of this document to imputations against Belgium; it reproduces the revelations of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, from October to December, 1914, concerning the documents, "Barnardiston-Ducarne," "Bridges-Jungbluth," "Greindl," "Espionnage, military manuals, and English reports."

It corrected the "insignificant error of translation" (*bedeutungsloser Uebersetzungsfehler*), as the *Norddeutsche* of the 10th of March, 1915, called it, which in the Ducarne report transformed "conversation" into "convention" (*Abkommen*). For the edification of the reader, I reproduce below the passage of the manuscript where the compilers allege that they find at the

end of the second line a word written in a "very illegible" manner (*sehr undeutlich*):

Everyone, however, will at a first glance read this word as "*conversation.*"[1]

To discount this rectification, the endorsement which the Belgian General inscribed upon the envelope containing the report has been placed in a line by itself. In spite of the entreaties of several friends, I deliberately avoided discussing this question in *La Belgique neutre et loyale;* I considered it and I still consider it

[1] In this connection a remarkable fact has just been brought to light by my compatriot, Mr. Passelecq, who, as director of the *Bureau Documentaire Belge* (B.D.B.), disposes of numerous sources of information. In a very careful examination of the *White Book*, he says:

"We recently received a few numbers of the monthly propaganda review, officially published at Berlin, in several languages, since August, 1914 (and freely circulated in all neutral countries), under the title of *Kriegschronik: Kriegstagebuch, Soldatenbriefe, Kriegsbilder* (in French: *Journal de la guerre, Lettres de soldats en campagne, Illustrations;* in Dutch, *Oorlogskroniek;* etc.) and with the imprimatur 'Printed and published by M. Berg at Berlin.' Among these numbers were included, for the 'month of November, 1914,' a copy

as puerile; but the Prosecution insists and my critics reproach me for my silence. Does not P. Schumann (*Hat Belgien sein Schicksal verschuldet? Antwort auf Prof. Waxweilers gleichnamige Schrift; Verlag des Dresdner Anzeigers*, p. 30) accuse me in this connection of falsifying the texts?

It can easily be imagined in what circumstances an endorsement was made by the General upon the envelope into which he had just slipped the rough draft of his report. With the red pencil in his hand, he inscribes on the envelope a rubric, indicating the subject of the document which it contains; the General is no

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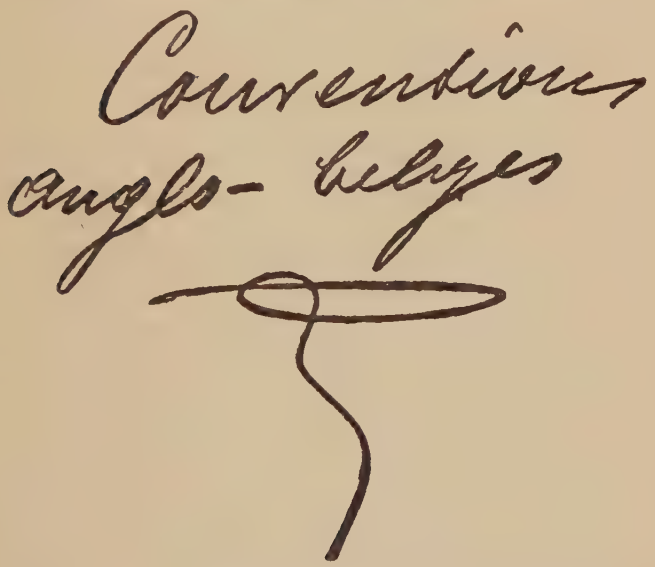
of the edition in the French language and also one in the German language.

"Now, what was our surprise, in comparing these two simultaneous editions of the same pamphlet, to find that, whereas the German edition contains, in the German version of the Ducarne manuscript, the alteration of the *Nordd. Allg. Zeitg.* (*Abkommen*), the French edition does not contain it, but, on the contrary, reproduces, correctly *printed*, the exact text of the manuscript: 'Conversation.'" See the facsimiles in Passelecq, *Essai critique et notes sur l'altération officielle des documents belges*, p. 40 (Berger-Levrault, *Page d'histoire*, 1916). It is obvious that if, at Berlin, it was possible in one edition to *print* correctly, it was because the word had been correctly read.

jurist; he has no scruples as to the choice of the word: "What does this report refer to? to conventions, what the deuce! since I have settled various things with the military *attaché*," and



the General writes in big letters, following up his inscription with a long flourish, as is done when a matter is finished: "Conventions anglo-belges." Notice carefully that he does not write "convention" in the singular, for the

simple reason that in his mind there are only "certain things which have been agreed upon."

Now this innocent endorsement—which Professor Schulte calls something very essential (*etwas sehr Wesentliches*)—is given, in the accusations against Belgium, the value of judicial evidence: "In view of this title," the *Norddeutsche* proclaims gravely, "no doubt can any longer be entertained as to the interpretation which Belgium herself put upon these documents from the point of view of public international law (*staatsrechtliche Bedeutung*)" (article quoted).

I will add nothing, except perhaps this. Since, in order to appreciate the judicial value of a document, it suffices to know the endorsement under which it has been placed in an envelope by a military man, I also may invoke a classifying rubric which the *Norddeutsche* quoted, in passing, on the 13th of October, 1914, but on which it neglected to lay much stress: it appears that the famous envelope was

found in a dossier bearing this inscription: "*English Intervention in Belgium.*" Since there is a choice of rubrics, I retain the second.

This is more important. In the last official edition, the principal falsification of the text is maintained; the essential phrase: "the entrance of the English would only take place after the violation of our neutrality by Germany," is not inserted in its proper place in the German translation; it is still quoted,—exclusively in French, moreover, and, consequently, it is ignored by the majority of German readers, —only as an afterthought, outside the report, and as if it were a marginal note, added after the report had been drawn up: "*Auf dem Schriftstück findet sich noch der folgende Randvermerk.*"

I have shown by reproducing (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 178) a facsimile of this part of the report, how inaccurate this method of presenting things is: in reality, the sentence forms part of the original text, it is written by

the same hand, at the same moment as the whole of the draft,—for the document is a rough draft freely sprinkled with erasures, suppressions; and additions. To remove the sentence from the text of which it forms part, is to commit a forgery.

Such are, in their real form, the documents put in by the Prosecution.

One thing in connection with this now famous military report is surprising: it is that none of those in Germany who have occupied themselves with it have fixed their attention upon the first two paragraphs of the document. They will be found in their original form on the opposite page.

These paragraphs are material: they mark the beginning of the report; they define the nature, the object, and the scope of the matter. Let us read them over again slowly.

"The first visit dates from the middle of January." The English military *attaché* came then to see the General: a visit from one soldier

to another. I am going to make this point clearer, relying upon trustworthy information: a personal visit, made at the General's private residence, and not announced beforehand in any way.

Of what did the *attaché* speak in opening the conversation?

"*The preoccupations of the General Staff of his country*": soldiers' anxieties. Relative to what? "*To the general political situation and to the contingencies of war at the moment.*"

Were these anxieties extraordinary? The visit took place in the middle of January, 1906. Now I find in a collection of diplomatic documents published by the Berlin Department of Foreign Affairs, of which I will speak later on (*Belgische Aktenstücke:*—1905–1914. *Herausgegeben vom Auswärtigen Amt*), a letter of the 14th January, 1906, addressed to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs by the *chargé d'affaires* in London, and I read in it: "The Minister for Foreign Affairs has several times

of late repeated to the various Ambassadors accredited to London that Great Britain was pledged to France in the matter of Morocco, and that she would carry out her engagements to the end, even in the event of a Franco-German war, whatever it might cost her. The press and public opinion manifest the same sentiments. The various cases of friction which have arisen between this country and Germany, more particularly at the time of the South African War, are recalled, and it is added that if the Algeciras Conference, which has been held at Germany's request, should fail through the latter's fault, not only would all hope of an Anglo-German understanding be lost, but actual hostility between the two countries would be provoked."

So that in January, 1906, there actually were very grave anxieties in England.

But did that touch Belgium? Undoubtedly, for here we have the important communication, which was the object of the visit:

"*An expeditionary force of about a hundred and fifty thousand men was contemplated in the event of an attack on Belgium.* This is plain enough: an expedition was *contemplated should Belgium be attacked.* What then? In 1870, on the revelation of the secret negotiations between Napoleon III. and Bismarck for the annexation of Belgium, language much more categorical had been used: on the 30th of July, the English Cabinet had decided that England's pledge to Belgium would be kept, even were this to lead to war, and it had obtained from Parliament an almost unanimous vote of an extraordinary credit of two millions sterling and a supplementary contingent of twenty thousand men. Gladstone had officially told the Belgian Minister that "the incident of the secret Franco-Prussian treaty was of the greatest gravity, and that he pledged England still further in the affairs of Belgium." Compared with all the political manœuvring of 1870, how innocent the step taken in 1906 appears. An

English military *attaché* comes quite simply, in a confidential capacity, to inform the Chief of the Belgian General Staff of a projected expedition of troops should Belgium be attacked.

It was so entirely an informal piece of information, and nothing more, that the military *attaché* hastened "to ask how this action would be interpreted by Belgium." To such a question, what was bound to be the answer of any Chief of Staff just informed that in case his country, conventionally neutral, should be attacked, one of the Powers who had guaranteed that neutrality would come to its aid? Exactly what the Belgian General actually replied: "From the military point of view, this action can only be favourable, but this *question of intervention* (note the word in passing) *also concerns the political powers, and therefore I am bound to discuss it with the Minister for War.*"

As to questions of a military order, the Belgian Chief of Staff had always, in the course of his career, considered this domain as his

own, because he had all its responsibilities: "it was"—I am authorized to make use of his own expression—"a rule which he had imposed upon himself in all strategical or tactical work or studies, for he held that these questions, being specially within his province and competence, depended upon the General Staff alone." So he addressed no report to the Minister of War upon these conversations with the English military *attaché* until they had come to an end.

If I desired to pursue the careful analysis of the Belgian General's report, I might multiply proofs of its incontestable correctness. Thus I read a little further on: "Mr. Barnardiston inquired if our dispositions were sufficient *to ensure the defence of the country* during the crossing over and the transport of the English troops, a time which he estimated at about ten days. I replied that the fortresses of Namur and of Liège *were safe from any sudden attack* and that in four days our field army, one hund-

red thousand strong, would be in a position to intervene."

Still further on, mark the expressions: "*We could reckon, that, in twelve or thirteen days* there would be landed, etc."—"He asked me to examine the question of the transport of these forces *towards the part of the country where they would be useful.*"—"I insisted once more as energetically as possible upon the necessity of hastening the maritime transports, so that the English troops *should be with us* between the eleventh and the twelfth day."

How clearly the idea stands out in all these lines that it was a question of *coming to the help of Belgium after she had been attacked!*

The authors of the *White Book* alone wander from the evidence into marginal commentaries. They attach, for instance, great importance to the fact that, among the documents found at Brussels, was a map of the deploying movements of the French army, and they boldly draw this conclusion: Belgium was not only in

agreement with England but "the three allied Powers had settled *in an exact manner* (*genau festgesetzt*) *the plans for a co-operation* of the allied armies" (*Aktenstücke zum Kriegsausbruch*, p. 98). Now, I am in a position to declare that this map was an "exercise map" made by one of the officers attached to the Belgian General Staff; this officer drew several of them, at the time of the conversations of 1906, as well as before and after that period, with a view to keeping the General Staff informed as to the possible strategic deploying movements of the French —and also of the German army. These maps were merely suggestive schemes, and I add from information given me by General Ducarne himself, that no map of any kind was drawn up in the course of the conversations with the English *attaché;* to this the dossier found at Brussels bears ample testimony.

In order to show how completely, even from the purely military point of view, Belgium after these conversations was in exactly the

same position as before with regard to her guarantors, I revealed in *La Belgique neutre et loyale* (p. 179) that shortly after 1906, an "exercise journey" of the Belgian General Staff had had as a tactical theme a supposed disembarkation of British troops in Belgium. I can be still more precise today; here is the list of the directions given to the "exercise journeys" during the five years which followed the conversations:

1906, *towards Germany;*
1907, *towards France;*
1908, *towards England;*
1909, *towards Germany;*
1910, *towards France;*

In particular, the journey of 1908 was based upon the hypothesis that *France and England were making common cause in order to cross Belgium in a war against Germany.*

Can we indeed wish for facts more destructive to the Accusation?

. . . . . .

One of the accusers of Belgium, Doctor Richard Grasshoff,[1] has himself felt this.

So he passes lightly over the commentaries of the semi-official pamphlets and confines himself to saying (I give a summary of his argument):

"Let us set aside all incidents susceptible of more than one interpretation (p. 6) . . . let us give no consideration to the instinctive suppositions which the fact immediately suggests in every reasonable mind (p. 7). This remains none the less true: the Belgian Govern-

[1] Doctor (juris. et phil.) Richard Grasshoff, *Belgiens Schuld, zugleich eine Antwort an Professor Dr. Waxweiler*, Reimer, Berlin, 1915—French translation, *La Belgique coupable*—same publisher.

Since I am entering into a discussion with this author he will allow me to point out that he has very inaccurately attributed to me tendencies and expressions which are not to be found in my book. He writes: "As a German endowed with a mediocre judgment, *the greatest concession which Mr. Waxweiler's magnanimity makes to our intelligence* (p. 7 of the French translation); here is the corresponding passage of the German edition: "Wir wollen als besonnene Deutsche von mässigem Urteil—*dass uns Herr Waxweiler grossmütig in höchsten Falle der Einsicht zugesteht*" (pp. 10–11).

I never wrote anything of the kind.

I said, in connection with Germany's diplomatic proceed-

ment ought to have warned Germany, for if, in the future, England should have wished some day to land troops in Belgium without waiting for the German attack,—and the Belgian Government must have known from history that England was perfidious enough to do so,—she had made herself acquainted with all the technical details necessary. Now, Germany, a guarantor like England, had a right to know the same things. The Belgian Government ought to have asked itself: Now that England has secured for herself such a monopoly

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ings of the 29th of July to the 4th of August, 1914, which revealed such perversity of intention towards Belgium: "Germany's best friends, even Germans themselves who were able during the agonizing weeks which our country experienced to keep a sense of moderation, surely must feel, in the presence of these facts, an inexpressible uneasiness and, to speak plainly, a disquieting remorse?" (p. 117). And in the German translation: "Empfinden die besten Freunde Deutschlands, ja die Deutschen selbst, die trotz den bangen Ereignissen der letzten Monate ein mässiges Urteil bewahrt haben, nicht ein unbeschreibliches Unbehagen und, um es ganz zu sagen, nagende Reue?" (p. 102).

None of my texts, as can be seen, contain anything which justifies the author's remark.

In his pamphlet, Dr. Grasshoff repeats this annoying misconstruction three times (pp. 10, 17, 45).

of information, will Germany always regard herself as bound by a treaty of guarantees, one of the contracting parties of which threatens to secure for herself the lion's share? Does Germany believe in Albion's fidelity?" (pp. 8–9).

In short, for Dr. Grasshoff, the whole accusation against Belgium might be summed up thus: Belgium, according to him, had destroyed the balance of her neutrality by granting England a monopoly through the communication of military secrets. Professor Frank, in his turn, sees in this imputation the main indictment against Belgium (*Die Belgische Neutralität*, p. 31).

But we have only to read General Ducarne's complete report (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 283 *et seq.*) to see that the Chief of the Belgian General Staff confided no Belgian military secrets whatever to his interlocutor; on the contrary, he received very interesting confidences concerning the English dispositions;

he arranged measures with a view to concerted action on the part of the two armies, always in view of "*combined operations in the contingency of a German aggression.*" He confined himself to "convincing the English *attaché* of the Belgian army's determination to impede the enemy's movements as much as possible, and not to take refuge from the beginning in Antwerp." Nothing more.

I am happy to be able to publish here a recent declaration of the former Chief of the Belgian General Staff: If a French or German military *attaché* had addressed himself to him and had invited him to take measures with a view to combining an eventual defence of the guaranteed territory, he would have given him exactly the same reception. But this would not have prevented the General Staff from keeping its own dispositions secret and from refraining to communicate to any of the military *attachés* those measures which it might have adopted with the others.

The accusers of Belgium really lose sight of the fact that she was an independent, sovereign State, in complete control of her own private affairs, and that she did not want any kind of infeodation; she adopted for her own defence the measures "which it suited her to take," as was declared in 1887 by the former Belgian Minister, Frère-Orban, who seized that opportunity to recall to the Chamber these words of Marshal von Moltke: "It is Belgium's own business to choose her means of defence" (*Cf.* Descamps, *La Neutralité de la Belgique*, p. 409, par. 5: "The choice of appropriate means of defence").

Well,—since the accusers of Belgium show themselves so suspicious with regard to the rôle of foreign military *attachés* at Brussels, I will inform them of a precedent which is certainly piquant. On the 12th of May, 1875, Baron Lambermont, who had long directed Belgium's diplomacy, wrote to M. Jules Devaux, the chief of King Leopold's II.'s Cabinet:

"I was told and retold in almost supplicating terms: Namur and Liège must be placed in a state of defence. It is not a question of extensive works, but only of a system involving a modest outlay. It was even pointed out that these works were indispensable in both directions; 'you can declare when proposing them that you are carrying them out quite as much with a view to an army coming from the other side. So we are not asking for any privileges, but we attach great importance to the line of the Meuse being barred.'

"To sum up, I cannot better condense my interlocutor's meaning than by repeating the words he used: 'All we ask of you, is to hold out for five days; that done, your task will be accomplished.'"

Baron Lambermont's interlocutor was no other than the German military *attaché* at Brussels, Major von Sommerfeld. He had come to see, not a military man, but the most eminent personality of the Department of

Foreign Affairs. He had not merely asked him to adopt practical measures, in common with his own Government, in case the German army should be obliged, conformably to the treaties, to help the Belgian army in the defence of the territory, but he had pressed him to engage his Government in an undertaking then quite novel, to modify the defensive system of the country profoundly,—and this simply in order to meet Germany's strategic needs.

The *military* conversation of 1906 is considered an act of treachery in Germany today; what would have been said of it if it had had the importance of the *diplomatic* conversation of 1875?[1]

[1] It is not idle to emphasize the fact that in 1875 it was Germany who was urging Belgium to place Namur and Liège in a state of defence.

Professor Schulte will doubtless be very much surprised to learn this, for in the conjectures which he piles up in order to incriminate Belgium's policy, he represents the fortifications of the Meuse as directed against Germany (in particular p. 86). It is of very slight importance, moreover, that Moltke later expressed a different opinion to King Leopold II.; this change of opinion shows, on the contrary, how well advised Belgium was in consulting her own interests alone when she

That the conversations of 1906 did not go beyond what was strictly compatible with the obligations of neutrality, cannot be contested by any sound mind. But it is possible to assert, in addition, that they had no influence whatever on Belgium's foreign policy.

In fact, we have recently come into the possession of a precious source of information emanating from the Berlin Department of Foreign Affairs, which gives it no common value for the defence of Belgian policy. It is a series of diplomatic reports addressed to Brussels by ten Belgian Ministers and *chargés d'affaires*, who represented Belgium in Berlin, London, and Paris between 1905–1914: *Belgische Aktenstücke;* I have already referred to them (p. 68). I will not dwell upon the fact that the

decided upon the measures suitable for ensuring the defence of her territory.

M. Schulte will likewise be astonished to learn that, towards 1890, there was quite a commotion in France, concerning this very project of the fortifications of the Meuse, brought forward in 1887; it was affirmed that the project formed part of an agreement binding Belgium to Germany. I have already referred to this unjust campaign above (p. 28).

selection of reports leaves a very different impression on the mind from that which the complete series would give, if it were published; nor will I enquire in what measure these reports explain the policy of this or that European Power. Taking Belgium's point of view alone, I perceive that independently of all the personal opinions which may be found in them, we must look into these documents as if we were looking at the image of an object in a mirror; thus considered, the reports give in some sort as by reflection precise indications as to Belgium's foreign policy.

Let us then open the collection which the German Chancellery has thought it well to make public, and let us seek in it what the Belgian Ministers, accredited to the three great capitals, wrote on the subject of the direction of policy in which they collaborated. In the hundred and forty pages of the *Aktenstücke* we shall not find one word, not one allusion to an infeodation of Belgian policy to any

one of the three great neighbouring Powers, and, in particular, to England. Opportunities for such allusions were, however, innumerable: the very first page of the collection deals with the tension in the relations between France and England on the one hand, and Germany on the other; we are on the morrow of Tangiers and on the eve of Algeciras. We tread on burning ground. Do we observe on the part of the Belgian diplomatists any hesitation in venturing upon it, any constraint in speaking to their Government of the conflicts which are in progress or in preparation? None. They set forth their opinions openly. In this collection, gathered together by the adversary, in which he has obviously included only those documents which promised some reinforcement of his case, there is not one thought, expressed or implied, which makes it possible to incriminate Belgium's policy in any degree whatever.

These reports are exactly such as we should expect to find in the archives of a country

whose every attitude in foreign affairs was governed, as I have shown, by anxiety to ensure the life of the nation and avoid every form of subjection. Whatever the event and wherever it may happen, Belgium's representatives always judge it from the national point of view, not only ten years ago, in September, 1905 (*Aktenstücke*, p. 9: "*From our point of view*, it is to be hoped that the Secretary of State at Berlin is right"), but also on the eve of war, in July, 1914 (*id.*, p. 139: "*So far as we are concerned*, we are not called upon to take sides").

Thus, the ten Belgian diplomatists are completely ignorant of the so-called "connivance" of Belgium with the Entente. Now, only those who know nothing of diplomatic organization could imagine that for ten consecutive years, ten different representatives of a country, accredited to three neighbouring governments, could have remained systematically in ignorance of decisive acts, which would have drawn the national policy into a clearly defined course

with regard to these three governments. This would have been all the more impossible in the case of Belgium during this period, because one of the Ministers whose name appears most often in the list of the published reports, Count Greindl, Minister at Berlin, enjoyed an authority in Belgian diplomatic circles due to his age and experience. The published reports confirm in this respect in a singular manner what I have said elsewhere of this diplomatist (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 181), namely that "it was customary to communicate to him from time to time documents bearing upon the international situation of the country."

But let us turn over the leaves of the collection more attentively, and let us see if we shall not discover in it some special references to the military conversations of 1906.

As a matter of fact we *do* find such references —and unable to pass them over in silence, the Accusation has resorted to the expedient of representing the opinions expressed by the Bel-

gian diplomats as "warnings" addressed to their Government, pointing out the perils of an alleged new policy. The propagandist pamphlet *La neutralité Belge* says, for instance: "Count Greindl warns his Government insistently against the terrible danger to which Belgium has exposed herself by her adhesion to the Powers of the Entente" (p. 7); the pamphlet again says: "With all the lucidity permissible from a diplomatist to his Government, Count Greindl reminded his, that it was violating its duties of neutrality in binding itself by subversive engagements" (*id.*); and farther on: "The Belgian Government did not lack warnings, but it remained blind to the end" (p. 8). Professor Hönn, in his article "Aus belgischen Archiven" (in *Das grössere Deutschland*, 21 August, 1915, p. 1123), does not hesitate to conclude that "the obstinacy of the Belgian Government in not following the advice of its diplomatists makes its guilt doubly great." The official collection itself returns to this

theme: "It was," we read at the end of the introduction, "a misfortune for Belgium that she would not listen to the voices of her diplomatists."

The thesis that the Belgian Government had received remonstrances from its representatives abroad claims to be founded more especially upon a report sent in 1911 by Count Greindl to the Foreign Office at Brussels; this report, however, is not reproduced in the diplomatic collection of the *Belgische Aktenstücke;* the *Norddeutsche* of the 13th of October, 1914, published only an ingeniously selected fragment which was reproduced in the last *White Book* (p. 59). I have already stated (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, pp. 180, 181) that Count Greindl's report was not made on the occasion of the conversations of 1906 with the English military *attaché;* it furnishes the Department with the opinion which the latter had asked for concerning an essay written by a superior functionary and entitled: "What will Belgium

do in the event of a Franco-German war?" In his reply, which constitutes a long memorandum, Count Greindl considers various eventualities of the violation of Belgian neutrality. He dwells first of all, in curiously prophetic language be it noted, on the German danger; then he points out the Franco-British danger. He makes certain reservations concerning the work submitted to him, but nowhere does he reveal any intention to criticize or warn the Government with regard to its policy. And yet he alludes to the conversations of 1906: it was the opportune moment for minatory words; but, on the contrary, the Count expresses himself in terms which show complete confidence; "we" know what to think; "we" have shown that we would not allow ourselves to be intimidated, etc.

The same mental attitude is apparent both in the other reports of Count Greindl and in those of his colleagues of London and Paris. The Accusation would be un-

able to bring a single quotation to support its thesis.

Hence it is evident that the passages in which the Belgian diplomatists speak of the military conversations are to be taken merely at their face value: they have no didactic intention whatever.

Now all these passages, *without exception*, concur in showing that Belgium's representatives *knew* the conversations had not had the least influence upon the policy of the country.

The first mention of the conversations of 1906 is that of the 5th of April of *that very year*, in a report of Count Greindl's—a definite proof that the Belgian Government, far from dissimulating what it had just learnt, announced the fact, without any delay, to the father of Belgian diplomacy. And how did the latter express himself that day, when he had just been told about the matter and while his impressions were still fresh? "If," he said, "any doubt (as to the significance of a visit of the King of

England to Paris) could still subsist, the singular *advance* made by Colonel Barnardiston to General Ducarne would have dissipated it." (*Belgische Aktenstücke*, p. 21.) Nothing more: no allusion, even distant, either to a convention or to any infeodation whatever of Belgian policy; the diplomatist *knows* that nothing of the sort has taken place.

A year later, in April, 1907, Count Greindl has another opportunity of giving his judgment and, a characteristic thing, he practically makes use of the same terms as on the first occasion. "We ourselves," he now writes, "have had occasion to record the singular *overtures* made by Colonel Barnardiston to General Ducarne (*id.*, p. 34).

And, on a third occasion, four years later, he again expressed himself in a similar manner: "It is a continuation of the singular *propositions* which were made some years ago to General Ducarne by Colonel Barnardiston" (*id.*, p. 102).

Advances—overtures—propositions: it was solely in this aspect, which was strictly in accordance with facts, that the military conversations of 1906 appeared to the Belgian diplomatist, whose testimony the Accusation so readily invokes.

What is more, there is in the report of which a fragment was published by the *Norddeutsche*, a sentence showing that the same diplomatist considered that the projects communicated in 1906 by the English military *attaché* took into consideration a possible resistance of the Belgian Army to the advance of the English troops. He wrote, in fact: "The English army would enter our country at once by the north-west, which would give it the advantage of entering into action immediately, *of meeting the Belgian army, if we risked a battle*, in a region where we should not have the support of any fortress, of seizing provinces rich in resources of every kind, *in any case, of hindering our mobilization*, or of *allowing it only after having obtained* from

us formal pledges that this mobilization would be made to England's advantage."

The independence of Belgium with regard to her guarantors is thus manifest on all sides. It is so great and so real that a year before the war, Baron Beyens, Belgian Minister at Berlin, ex-Minister of King Albert's Household and a person in a position to be particularly well informed as to the tendencies of the foreign policy of his country, was able to write in one of the diplomatic reports which Germany has published: "The danger would appear real and urgent if the partition of the Congo became, under England's auspices, the object of secret negotiations between the three great Powers who are our neighbours in Europe, and if our African spoils became the instrument of a pacific understanding between them. But things have not come to this. We must none the less, in my opinion, keep our eyes open to all the possible consequences of an Anglo-German understanding" (*Belgische Aktenstücke*,

p. 124). The same Minister, writing three months before the war, and calling his Government's attention to the fact that an opinion somewhat less hostile to the Entente appeared to be forming at Berlin, concluded that for Belgium the most interesting question was to know if, in the event of an international conflict, England would be as fully disposed as in 1911 to take her stand beside France, and if, in a word, Belgium would still have to dread the entry of English soldiers (*id.*, p. 233).

Even if we rely exclusively on the documents of the Accusation and confine ourselves to the ground it has chosen, we may thus evoke truly striking justifications of Belgium's policy—to quote the expression used in my presence by an eminent neutral personage.

In its eagerness to impeach Belgian policy, the Accusation even brings forward facts which, on examination, turn against itself. Professor Schulte, for instance, attaches great importance

(*Von der Neutralität Belgiens*, p. 106 *et seq.*) to a speech[1] delivered on the 11th of December, 1909, in the Belgian Senate by a former Minister, M. de Favereau, who held the portfolio of Foreign Affairs at the very moment when the military conversations of 1906 took place. M. de Favereau's intervention in Parliament was caused by a discussion on the military reform which introduced general service; the ex-Minister wished to rally his friends of the Right to the project: he did not hesitate to speak to them

[1] As to the text of this speech, I really do not see why Professor Schulte says that the official report of the *Annales parlementaires* has been modified, or why he thinks there are differences between this report and a correspondence sent from Brussels to the *Kreuzzeitung* of Berlin. The first paragraph which he wishes to add to the official report (p. 122) occurs farther on in the text of the speech (p. 123 at the end); the second paragraph (p. 123–124) occurs p. 126–127; finally, the third paragraph (p. 125) occurs on that very page. The correspondent of the *Kreuzzeitung* merely emphasised certain ideas, but the text which was communicated in the Senate is identical with that which was printed in the *Annales parlementaires*. I need hardly deal with the quite gratuitous assertion (p. 109) that if the correspondent of another German newspaper, a few days after the speech had been delivered, gave an inaccurate version of a material passage, it was because he had probably been semi-officially invited to do so.

in severe language, nor to lay upon them the weight of the responsibilities which threatened them.

The thesis which he sought to combat was that of the supposed tranquillity created by the treaties of 1839; it was a false tranquillity, explained the orator, who took this opportunity to define once more the very realistic policy imposed by permanent neutrality both on Belgium and on her guarantors.

Let us beware, said M. de Favereau, of thinking that in 1830 the Powers were swayed by any consideration but that of their own interests, or that they will be swayed by any other consideration in the future. They will intervene in our favour only exactly within the limits of those interests. The example of 1870 is always being quoted to us, and we are reminded of the protective action of England, who at that time addressed the two belligerents in our favour. Well, since 1870 the situation has changed profoundly: will the new policy which England

seems to have adopted *enable her to play the same part to us any longer?* When the day of danger comes, *will she not be bound by engagements to one of the belligerents and will her influence still be at our service?* I base my judgment, declared the orator, *upon what I saw as a Minister;* I regret to be unable, by reason of the discretion which I must observe, to set forth things here in detail to you. But let us remember that, in our position, *we are necessarily without allies; we remain isolated;* God grant that no great Power will ever want to drag us, under cover of this isolation, into combinations contrary to our interests. What would happen, for example, if we were not in a position ourselves to ensure the defence of Antwerp? Seeing that this fortress could not be protected by us, or belong to any of the great Continental Powers, would it not inevitably fall into the hands of England, and who knows when and how it would be evacuated? It will suffice, concluded the ex-Minister, to

lay these questions before a country resolved to be the master of its destiny; it will recognize its duties.

Such, reduced to fundamental data, is the substance of the speech delivered at the end of the year 1909 in the Belgian Senate by the man who, at that moment, could speak with the greatest authority on the foreign policy of the country. It demonstrates with dazzling clearness that after the military conversations of 1906, Belgium had not deviated by one inch from her traditional line of conduct. Professor Schulte thought to embarrass the defenders of Belgian policy by calling attention to this declaration: they are infinitely grateful to him, on the contrary, for his happy thought. Indeed he himself feels some scruples in terminating his arguments, but he dispels them immediately by insinuating (p. 112) that M. de Favereau left the Ministry to avoid liability for the alleged policy of connivance. As a matter of fact M. de Favereau's resignation had nothing

whatever to do with the conversations of 1906, and nothing authorised Professor Schulte to establish a connection between the two incidents.

. . . . . .

Be it so! the indictment then says: let us put aside the conversations of 1906. But what was the attitude of the Belgian Government six years later, in 1912, after the action taken by another English *attaché*, Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges, to the chief of the Belgian General Staff?

Before discussing the indictment on this score, let us recall what this proceeding of 1912 was.

We must go back to April, a few months after the Agadir crisis, in the course of which England had for the first time officially declared her solidarity with France. The English *attaché* came to see General Jungbluth, and said to him (I reproduce from the *White Book*):

"England disposes of an army, capable of being sent on the Continent, composed of six infantry divisions and eight cavalry brigades, in all a hundred and sixty thousand men. She has also all that is necessary for defending her insular territory. Everything is ready."

Nothing in this military information concerns Belgium; nothing is even new to her Government, for—according to the *Belgische Aktenstücke*, p. 101, 102—the Belgian Minister at Berlin had written to Brussels four months earlier, on the 6th of December, 1911: "Until further notice, it must be looked upon as certain that the project of aiding France in a war with Germany by the landing of a corps of a hundred and fifty thousand English has been discussed in London."

But here is an important—and fresh—piece of information (I quote again from the *White Book*):

"The British Government, at the time of the recent events, would have immediately landed

troops in your territory *even if you had not asked for help.*"[1]

The Belgian Chief of Staff protests immediately: " . . . But our consent would be necessary for this."

"I know," replied the *Attaché*, "but as you would not be in a position to prevent the Germans from entering your country, England would have disembarked her troops in any case."

The Belgian General's reply was therefore immediate: the General was, indeed, familiar with the thesis which Belgium had always maintained, namely that none of the guarantors could intervene without the adhesion of Belgium herself. I have shown (*La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 55–56), that in international law this thesis is strongly contested, not only

[1] Professor Schulte (*Von der Neutralität Belgiens*, p. 99) accuses me of having made no mention of this essential declaration. He is mistaken; it appears in my book, p. 181: " . . . Even if Belgium did not ask for it." It would have been idle to reproduce it a second time with the variation: "In any case."

from the general point of view of principles, but from the special point of view of Belgium. To the authorities whose opinions I then quoted, I am desirous of adding the opinion of a German author, Dr. juris Siegfried Richter, who published, before the war as it happens, in 1913, an important work, *Die Neutralisation von Staaten*, in *Die Rechtseinheit*, a series of monographs issued under the direction of Professors Kohler and Stier-Somlo—two colleagues who are now unsparing in their strictures on my country. Richter does not hesitate to declare that it is impossible to make the intervention of a guarantor dependent upon the formal or tacit assent of the State covered by permanent neutrality (p. 220): according to this point of view, England's intentions were perfectly lawful. But I will not return to this purely theoretical discussion. I am eager to come back to the indictment, which incriminates the attitude adopted by Belgium after the revelation of the English *attaché*.

It is in this connection, indeed, that insistent, categorical, and malicious attacks are now incessantly renewed:

"As to the Belgian Government," says the *White Book* (p. 66) its duty was not only to repel the English insinuations with the utmost vigour, but also to inform the signatory Powers of the Treaty of 1839, the German Government in particular, of England's repeated attempts to seduce Belgium from her neutrality. The Belgian Government, far from acting in this way, thought itself authorized and called upon *to take, in concert with the English General Staff, military measures of defence* against a supposed invasion contemplated by Germany. On the other hand, it never made the least attempt to come to an understanding with the German Government or with the responsible German military authorities, on the subject of a possible entry of Anglo-French troops into Belgium, although it was perfectly aware of this eventuality, as the discovered documents prove.

The Belgian Government was firmly resolved then to join Germany's enemies and to make common cause with them."

Still more violent is the propagandist pamphlet *Belgian Neutrality*, where we read (p. 8): "The Belgian Government remained blind to the end, deeply engaged as it was in negotiations concerning common military action. England's hand never afterwards relaxed its grip upon it." And further on (pp. 9–10): "The three countries applied themselves to a close co-operation. 'Neutral' Belgium then had become, in fact, an active member of the coalition against Germany; . . . Thanks to English intrigues, to which Belgium only too readily lent herself, the guaranteeing Treaty of 1839 was so completely divested of its tenor and of its nature as to become a *scrap of paper*. . . . With the aid of Belgium herself, England had undermined Belgian neutrality from within."

Finally, Professor Schulte draws up a verita-

ble indictment (*Von der Neutralität Belgiens*, pp. 115–117). I underline two passages.

"In 1912," he cries, "a responsible English military personality plainly declares that England would have disembarked troops in Belgium in any case. The Belgians show no displeasure at this: their Chief of the General Staff *continues to negotiate tranquilly* (*ihr Generalstabschef verhandelt ruhig weiter*); the Government makes no communication to the other guaranteeing Powers . . . The present governors of Belgium had forgotten the words of the founder of the dynasty: 'To maintain our neutrality sincerely, loyally, and bravely, must be our constant aim.' The Belgian ruling circles looked upon this neutrality as non-existent (*hielten für ein Nichts*). . . . History will one day write in plain terms; Belgium had received from Europe a solemn guarantee; under this guarantee the country prospered for eighty-three years . . . But Belgium came to look upon her neutrality as a chain; the Government

knew that England was soon going to violate it, *it nevertheless continued to negotiate secretly with her*, and thus, so far as Germany was concerned, it deprived the neutrality of Belgium of every claim to existence."

To all this, there is only one reply: it is contrary to facts: nothing will prevail against these. This time we have a firm hold on the Accusation; we will not relax that hold.

We take it that the declaration of 1912 is the only important point for the moment.

Now, our accusers have been perfectly well aware since 1912, when the solitary interview reported above took place, *no single meeting took place between English and Belgian military men.*

It is therefore completely false to say that after the declaration of 1912, either the Chief of the Belgian General Staff, or the Belgian Government continued negotiations with England, and that Belgium consequently adhered to the Entente.

Do they wish to know what the Belgian Government did after the one and only interview of 1912?

The Belgian Government, far from negotiating with England in order to take a place in the Entente, informed the English Government "*of the apprehensions that obtained in Belgium lest England should violate Belgian neutrality first.*" In the interview which he had on this occasion with Sir Edward Grey, the Belgian Minister in London, without going into further details, drew attention to the fact that there had been some idea of "*England's disembarking troops for the purpose of forestalling the possible sending of German troops through Belgium towards France,*" and he explained that *it was these rumours which were causing apprehensions.* In consequence of this action in London, Sir Edward Grey, wishing to put an end to unfavourable interpretations, wrote on the 7th of April, 1913, a letter to the English Minister at Brussels, who sent a copy of it to the Belgian Minis-

ter of Foreign Affairs; in this letter, the head of the Foreign Office declared: "I am sure that this Government will never be the first to violate the neutrality of Belgium and I do not believe that any English Government would do so, or that public opinion in this country would ever approve of it. . . . To be the first to violate the neutrality and to send troops to Belgium would be to give Germany, for example, a justification for sending troops into Belgium. What we desire in Belgium's case as much as in the case of all the other neutral countries, is that their neutrality should be respected; as long as it remained unviolated by any other Power, we would certainly not send troops ourselves upon their territory" (see in the *Grey Book*, II., No. 100, the full text of this document, which was published for the first time on the 7th of December, 1914, by the English press).

This is what Belgium did—and our accusers are so well aware of it that on the 12th of Octo-

ber last, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was still occupied with this letter of Sir Edward Grey's, in order to point out that it could not really be considered as categorical and solemn, seeing that—the reason is amusing—the Minister had used the expression "I do not believe," in referring to the attitude of future English Governments!

Now, what Belgium did in 1913 in London, she had done in 1911 at Berlin, and this last step is of extreme importance to the point of view we are now discussing.

A controversy had just been stirred up by the Dutch scheme for the fortification of Flushing: various circumstances had again raised the question of Belgian neutrality and of the eventual intervention of her guarantors. The Government seized the opportunity. It immediately suggested to Berlin (*Grey Book*, No. 12) the idea "that a declaration made in the German Parliament on the occasion of a debate on foreign policy, would tend to appease public

opinion and *to allay suspicions which were regrettable from the point of view of the relations between the two countries.*" Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg replied that *he thoroughly appreciated the sentiments which had inspired Belgium's representations;* he then declared that Germany had no intention of violating Belgian neutrality.

What then was the meaning of this action on the part of Belgium, an action without precedent in the political history of our country, if not that the Belgian Government wished to put to the test the hypothesis of a violation of Belgian neutrality by the German armies, an hypothesis which the military conversations had taken into account in 1906, and which was justified by so many indications?

In other words, just as she asked England straightforwardly in 1913, Belgium asked Germany straightforwardly in 1911 to dispel her fears.

And Belgium not only spoke to London and to Berlin, but in a spirit of impeccable correct-

ness she entered into a diplomatic conversation in Paris, the significant tenor of which was revealed by the second *Grey Book* (No. 1).

On the 22d of February, 1913, in the course of an interview which the Belgian Minister had with the General Director of the Foreign Affairs of the Republic, the latter questioned him as to the scope of the projected military reform then under discussion in the Belgian Parliament.

In his reply the Minister "pointed out, with all necessary reserve, that the close relations established somewhat recently by England with certain Great Powers would no longer place her in the same position as formerly towards Belgium, although the existence of a free and independent Belgium continue to be vital to her policy. We desire to prevent Belgium, if possible, said the Minister, from again becoming the battlefield of Europe, as she was too often in the past."

He added that "Belgium meant to have a strong and important army, which would en-

able her completely and fully to do her duty, and to safeguard her independence and her neutrality."

"I perfectly understand," replied the Belgian Minister's interlocutor, "but are not your new armaments a result of your fear that this neutrality will be violated by France?"

"No," resumed the Minister, "they are no more directed against France than against Germany; they are designed to prevent anybody from entering our territory."

And he concluded thus: "I repeat, we do not trust to any calculation of probabilities; besides, what may be true today may no longer be true tomorrow, by reason of new circumstances, and *our aim is solely to prevent any violation of our neutrality, within the limits of our strength.*"

In the course of the interview, it was affirmed that France would never take the initiative in violating Belgian neutrality; but that if the German armies entered Belgium, and if the Belgians should not be strong enough to repel

them, the Government of the Republic would consider itself justified in taking the measures which it should judge expedient for the defence of its own territory.

Once more we find in the words of the Belgian Minister in Paris the governing political idea which had already been expressed by the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. de Favereau, in his speech of 1909: England's position in the European concert was henceforth no longer the same; Belgium thus found herself exposed to the possibility of no longer finding in this Power the same unfettered benevolence which was traditional in her policy; isolation. threatened the country; it was driven more and more to rely only upon itself.

How remote—I note in passing—how remote are these preoccupations which, since the new diplomatic arrangements which had arisen in Europe had inspired the whole of Belgium's policy, from the hypotheses formulated by Professor Karl Rathgen in his article in the

Preussische Jahrbücher: "Belgiens auswärtige Politik und der Kongo." According to him, it was England—always England!—who compelled Belgium to strengthen her military organization, and she probably made her recognition of the annexation of the Congo conditional upon this undertaking. We see that the fact was very different.

I was about to conclude by asking what remains of the accusation launched against the Belgian Government of having in 1912 broken her obligations towards the guarantors of the country, and notably towards Germany, when a significant fact came back to my mind. It dates from the very day before the sending of the German note, the 2d of August. The Treaty of Commerce between Belgium and Germany was to expire on the 31st December, 1917: now, the Department of Foreign Affairs, which controls the foreign commerce of a country, had, in the last days of July, prepared a

circular for the Chambers of Commerce and industrial and commercial associations, inviting them to examine the questions which might present themselves on that occasion. This circular was conceived in a spirit quite favourable to the maintenance of treaty relations with Germany. It was despatched at the very time when the German troops were crossing the frontier. . . . The fact is especially characteristic, if we collate it with the further fact that Belgium had no treaty of commerce with France or England.

The whole of this series of testimonies, all agreeing, whether they come from the Accusation or from the Defence, admit of only one conclusion.

During the troubled years which Europe passed through from 1905 to 1914 Belgium kept vigilant guard over her own interests. Steadfast in her attitude of sincere neutrality, she strove to obtain from the three guarantors

most interested in her fate, assurances which might strengthen the confidence she placed in them.

Far from infeoffing herself, she asserted her autonomy.

Far from betraying her trust, she gave abundant proof of her loyalty.

CHAPTER III

"BELGIUM WAS NOT CALLED UPON TO RESIST, FOR HER TERRITORY WAS NOT INVIOLABLE"

In the indictment brought against my country, it has been reserved for a barrister inhabiting Brussels, but who, having been born at Leipzig, is not of Belgian nationality, to support the most specious part of the accusation. Great efforts had been made to show that Belgium had herself violated her neutrality; but M. F. Norden has undertaken to prove that Belgium had not even a right in law to claim that her frontiers should be respected, seeing that—according to him—the inviolability of her territory had never been guaranteed. To tell the truth, M. Norden was not the first to formulate

this hypothesis after the outbreak of the war: in the number for February, 1915, of the *Deutsche Review*, the *Reichsgerichtsrat*, Wittmaack had already set forth the main lines of the thesis, and Professor Schulte has said a few words about it in his pamphlet (pp. 66–68) referring to a divergence of interpretation on the part of the Belgian jurists Nys and Descamps.

In order to discuss this thesis, which is now the subject of an entire pamphlet (F. Norden, *Neutral Belgium and Germany*, Brussels, Richard Press, 1915), I propose, first of all, to reduce it to its essential features.

Belgium, we are told, was mistaken in regarding herself as obliged, by the terms of the treaties, to oppose the passage of the German armies through her territory. Her error was derived from an unfounded interpretation of the clause referring to the neutrality of the country. Article 7 of the treaty concluded on the 19th of April, 1839, between Belgium and the Netherlands and placed the same day under

the guarantee of Austria, France, Great Britain, and Russia, declares, indeed, that "Belgium shall form an independent and perpetually neutral State." This text, which reproduces a convention of the 15th of November, 1831, makes no mention of the *inviolability* of the territory. Now the omission of this complementary guarantee was, it seems, intentional. A previous version (text of the 26th of June, 1831), known under the name of the Treaty of the Eighteen Articles, specified clearly that "the five Powers guaranteed the perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and the *inviolability* of the territory." The Powers, according to the theory which we are quoting, deliberately reduced the extent of their engagements, and granted Belgium a precarious guarantee, authorizing passage through her territory, and not laying upon the new State any obligation to oppose such passage in the interests of the other contracting Powers.

Obviously this thesis has a purely theoretic

importance, for Germany has never thought of invoking it: as the *Berne Tageblatt* (1915, No. 464) judiciously pointed out, the passage through Belgium, according to the terms of the Chancellor's declaration, constituted *ein Unrecht*, a violation of law, and not the fulfilment of a stipulated obligation.

But since the Accusation now invokes this tardy justification, we must perforce make a detailed examination of it. In this examination, I will for the moment set aside the actual question of the change in the wording of the diplomatic Act which sanctioned the existence of Belgium, and I will first of all enquire whether, in law as in fact, the neutralization of the country was compatible with a right of way established for the benefit of one of the Powers.

What, in fact, was the real meaning of Belgian neutrality? How must we represent to ourselves its signification, its extent, and its limits?

It would be futile to have recourse to subtle

doctrinal exegeses in order to reply to these questions: the guarantees given to Belgium are defined by the circumstances which gave rise to them; they assume their full value from the experiences which have consolidated them. It will be well, therefore, to go back to historical sources, and discover what were the intentions of the Powers at the time when they proclaimed the neutrality of Belgium, to what conditions of law and of fact this neutralization answered, and what lessons were taught by the events which inaugurated the new *régime*.

Let us go back to the foundation of Belgium as a State.

The Conference of London had just come to an agreement upon the proclamation of the *independence* of the country (Protocol of the 20th of December, 1830) But at the very time when it thus recognized the results of the Belgian Revolution, it declared solemnly that it had no intention of confining itself to this recognition: the separation of Belgium from Holland

tore a political system to pieces, to quote the very words of the plenipotentiaries; I mean the system established by the treaties of 1814 and of 1815.

"In forming," the plenipotentiaries say, "the union of Belgium and of Holland by the treaties in question, the signatory Powers of the said treaties had aimed at establishing a just equilibrium in Europe and ensuring the preservation of general peace.

"The events of the last four months have unfortunately proved that that perfect and complete amalgamation which the Powers desired to effect between these two countries, had not been realized, and that it would be henceforth impossible to bring it about; that the very object therefore of the union of Belgium with Holland no longer exists, and that from this moment it is essential to have recourse to *new arrangements in order to carry out the intentions for the execution* of which the union was to serve as a means.

"United to Holland, and forming an integral part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Belgium had to fulfil her share of the European duties of this kingdom, and of the obligations which had been contracted, by treaties, toward the other Powers. Her separation from Holland *cannot liberate her from that share of these duties and of these obligations.*

"The Conference will consequently occupy itself with discussing and concerting *the new arrangements best adapted to combine the future independence of Belgium* with the stipulations of treaties, with the interests and security of the other Powers, *and with the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.*"

But, as we know, the "stipulations of treaties," the "interests and security of the Powers," the "maintenance of the balance of power in Europe" here appear as diplomatic formulæ, covering an interplay of influences, resistances, and greeds. France, suspected by the other four Powers, had to be kept within her fron-

tiers; the bulwark constructed against her in the treaties of 1814 and 1815, by the union of Belgium with Holland had just been demolished by the separation of the two countries: this bulwark had to be replaced. On the other hand, France herself, desirous of casting off all the fetters which Europe had placed upon her, was favourably inclined to the creation upon her northern frontier of a State "entrusted to a sovereign who should be a convenient neighbour and might become a faithful ally"—to quote Talleyrand's expressions (*Mémoires*, Broglie edition, vol. iii., p. 421), and at no price would she consent to combinations which would have given England any foothold whatever on the Continent (*id.*, p. 410). Finally England was by no means opposed to the constitution of a strong State, which should be distinct from Holland, especially as, since the beginning of the negotiations, she had perceived the possibility of entrusting the destinies of this new State to a prince in

whom she had every confidence, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

The "new arrangements" suitable for combining these various political exigencies with the independence of Belgium as now declared were not easy to discover: all the measures discussed "were, Talleyrand relates, only temporary palliatives, which did not deliver us from permanent dangers. I had, he explains, meditated for several days upon a solution which I looked upon as decisive . . . this was a declaration, by the Powers, of the *neutrality* of Belgium. I submitted it to the Conference at its sitting of the 20th of January, 1831, where I had the satisfaction of causing it to be adopted and recorded in the protocol of that day" (vol. iv., p. 17).

The protocol of which Talleyrand speaks is explicit:

"The plenipotentiaries are unanimously of opinion that the great Powers owe to their clearly defined interests, to their union, to the

tranquillity of Europe, and to the accomplishment of the views recorded in their protocol of the 20th of December, a solemn manifestation, a striking proof of their firm determination to seek *no increase of territory, no exclusive influence, no isolated advantage*, in the arrangements relative to Belgium, as in all the circumstances which may still arise, and to give this country itself as well as all the States which surround it, the best guarantees of peace and security. In pursuance of these principles, and with these salutary intentions, the plenipotentiaries have resolved, etc. . . ."

The Conference perceived so clearly the necessity of welding the new arrangement, which was essentially founded upon the double basis of the independence and the neutrality of the new State, into the general political system of Europe, that it reiterated the declaration of its views in categorical terms, on the 19th February, 1831:

"The union of Belgium with Holland was

shattered. It is not within the province of the Powers to judge of the causes which had just broken the ties they had formed. But when they saw those ties broken, it still behoved them to attain the object which they had proposed to themselves in forming these. It was their duty to ensure, by means of new combinations, that European tranquillity, one of the bases of which had been the union of Belgium with Holland. The Powers were imperiously called upon to do so. They had the right, and events imposed upon them the duty, of *preventing the Belgian provinces, now independent*, from endangering the general security and the *balance of power in Europe*. . . .

"Every nation has its private rights, *but Europe also has its right;* social order has given it this right.

"The treaties which govern Europe, Belgium found already made and in force when she became independent; *she had therefore to respect them, and not to infringe them.* By respecting

them, she identified herself with the interests and the peace of the great community of European States; by infringing them, she might have brought about confusion and war. The Powers alone could avert this calamity, and since they *could* do so, they were bound to do so; they were bound to impose the salutary maxim *that the events which give birth to a new State in Europe do not give it the right to alter the general system into which it enters*, any more than the changes which arise in the condition of an ancient State justify it in believing itself released from its previous engagements."

This body of acts and declarations gives its full significance to Belgium's neutrality.

Belgium's neutrality was a rampart raised against conflicting ambitions; it was conceived, recognized, and guaranteed only for the purpose of preventing one or the other of the Powers "from seeking in these arrangements, as in any circumstances which may still arise, any exclusive influence, or any isolated advantage."

Is it not patent, therefore, that it would become a thing incomprehensible, indefensible, and incoherent, if it could tolerate a privilege of free passage through the neutralized territory in favour of any one of the guaranteeing Powers?

It is a special neutrality, asserts M. Norden (p. 38), a neutrality which is not impenetrable, according to the usual and vulgar meaning of the word; it is, in a word, a pervious neutrality (p. 19).

Not at all: Belgian neutrality was, on the contrary, in the minds of those who formulated it, so perfectly watertight that Talleyrand was able to write, in forwarding the decisive protocol of the 20th of January, 1831, to Paris (see above, p. 126): "The recognized neutrality of Belgium places this country henceforth in the same position as Switzerland" (vol. iv., p. 19). And elsewhere he defines what this assimilation means to France: "The ensured neutrality of Belgium gives us from Dunkirk to Luxemburg, a *defence* equal to that which we have from Bāle

to Chambéry, thanks to the neutrality of Switzerland" (*id.*, p. 38). Elsewhere, again, he speaks still more plainly: "The perpetual neutrality of Switzerland is especially favourable to France, which, surrounded by fortresses upon all the other parts of her frontiers, is unprovided with any upon the frontier bordering on Switzerland. *The neutrality of this country therefore gives her an impregnable bulwark upon the only point* where she is weak and unarmed" (vol. ii., p. 231).

Thus, whether it be a question of Belgium or of Switzerland, permanent neutrality involves *ipso facto* inviolability of territory.

This stands to reason: if the exclusive object of the neutralization agreement had not been to make all the frontiers of Belgium impassable, what purpose could it possibly have served?

M. Norden himself doubtless perceives the weakness of his argument, for he asks himself how a neutrality which should not imply inviolability could be violated at all? And he replies:

"It could evidently only be by an armed aggression, having for object to seize all or part of the territory or provinces of the neutral State" (p. 37). We divine the conclusion to which this reasoning leads: as, in August, 1914, Germany had no aggressive intentions, and merely claimed right of passage, she did not even violate the pervious neutrality which, according to M. Norden, the Powers had meant to grant Belgium (*id.*).

Does Mr. Norden think that in war words lose their meaning? It is not her *neutrality* which would be violated by "an armed aggression against Belgium," but her *independence*, guaranteed by the treaty of 1839 for the same purpose. The independence of a country is one thing; its neutrality is another, and if M. Norden ends by a simple substitution of one conception for the other, it is because he has, previously stripped the second of all meaning, and reduced it to a mere verbal expression.

Perhaps you are right, M. Norden will reply: it is possible that in law as in fact, the neutralization of Belgium involved the inviolability of her frontiers; we know, however, that the final treaty differs from the provisional treaties, precisely by the omission of the guarantee of inviolability; hence, in fact at least, the intentions of the Powers must have been modified.

I reply:

This is inaccurate precisely as regards the fact, for shortly after the Powers had adopted the new wording, various incidents arose which gave them an opportunity of formulating their views very clearly.

In December, 1831, a subsidiary convention, of which I shall have to speak at greater length further on, called forth very strong protests from the French Government. Now, in this connection, M. Casimir-Périer, alluding to a hypothetical crossing of the Belgian frontier by any one of the Powers, expressed himself as follows: "The guarantee given by the five

Powers implies the union of four against the fifth which should attempt to violate Belgian independence or neutrality." At the moment when M. Casimir-Périer spoke thus, France was confronted no longer with the primitive text of the 26th of June, 1831, but with the modified text, which had been approved on the 15th of November, 1831; she none the less declared that Belgian neutrality had, and could have, no other meaning than that imposed by the nature of things.

Another event—also subsequent to the Treaty of the 15th of November—showed even more clearly that the neutrality of Belgium always implied, in the intentions of the signatory Powers, the inviolability of her territory; the facts were recalled in 1901 in the Belgian Senate by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Session of the 6th of June):

"After the Treaty of the 15th of November, 1831," said the Minister, "Belgium was obliged to have recourse to the guarantee which had

been given her. At that moment, a part of the Belgian territory was still occupied by the armies of the Netherlands, and the citadel of Antwerp, notably, was in their hands. What did Belgium do? *She appealed to the guarantee contained in article 25 of the Treaty of the 15th of November*, in order to obtain the military aid of the Powers. France and England declared themselves ready to help her, and the intervention of the foreign armies ensured *respect for the integrity of the territory*, as far as Antwerp was concerned."

This intervention of the guaranteeing Powers on the morrow of the treaty of November, 1831, was, after all, merely a repetition under identical conditions, of a first intervention which took place between the treaty of June and that of November. The Netherlands having invaded Belgium, the London Conference had approved the use of a French army for a limited time, and had decided that an English naval squadron should repel the attacks of the Dutch along the coast.

After November, 1831, as before this date, when the new text had been accepted, no less than when the original text was in force, the Powers were, we see, fully agreed to withstand the violation of Belgian territory by armed intervention. In all the circumstances in which subsequently to the modification of the text, the Powers had to make manifest by deeds the interpretation they themselves gave to their solemn decision, they bore witness to the fact that the new text in no way altered the nature of their obligations, and that in proclaiming the neutrality of Belgium, they had expressly meant to keep her frontiers immune from invasion.

But M. Norden will again insist, why in that case did the Treaty of November suppress the reference to territorial inviolability? M. Norden offers an explanation: Between June and November, 1831, it happened, he says (p. 25), that the Dutch broke the armistice and invaded

Belgium, and that the Belgians were not able to resist them; the Powers, seeing that the Belgian army was too weak, accordingly came to the conclusion that, if France one day should in her turn invade Belgium, the Belgians would not be able to offer a serious resistance, and that, therefore, it was necessary to provide for such resistance in an effective manner; they provided for it, according to M. Norden, by deciding to revive for the benefit of Belgium an ancient stipulation relative to the occupation of certain fortresses situated upon her territory; as this stipulation entailed the introduction by Prussia and England of troops of occupation, the Powers, M. Norden concludes, suppressed the clause relative to inviolability in the treaty.

It cannot be denied that there is a certain attractive plausibility about this explanation. But a romance may also be plausible, and, in the present case, we find ourselves in the presence of a romance. In order to prove this,

I shall be obliged, at the risk of protracting my reply, to deal in detail with certain historical facts.

We must remember that in 1814–1815 the great Powers, in their anxiety to raise an effective barrier against France, had decided to construct or to maintain to the south of the Netherlands—that is to say, upon the territory of the future Belgium, a line of thirteen fortresses. In 1818, England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia had determined the eventual utilization of three fortresses by a protocol signed at Aix-la-Chapelle.

"The barrier system was re-established," says R. Dollot in his excellent historical account of *The Origins of the Neutrality of Belgium and the Barrier System* (p. 533). But the existence of this line of fortresses was looked upon by France as a permanent humiliation, and Talleyrand, when he advocated the neutralization of Belgium at the Conference of London, was firmly resolved to pull down this material

rampart, and replace it by a conventional barrier. He had made no secret of this in his correspondence with his government; he wrote in reference to the protocol of January, 1831, in which he had succeeded in having the neutralization of Belgium inserted, as I have explained above (p. 126): "The thirteen fortresses of Belgium by means of which our northern frontier was continually threatened, fall, so to speak, in consequence of this resolution, and we are henceforth freed from irksome trammels" (*Mémoires*, vol. iv., p. 19).

This opinion of Talleyrand's was, moreover, partially shared at least by the four Powers interested in the establishment of the barrier of fortresses, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia: on the 17th of April, 1831, they declared, by a special protocol, that "the fortresses were too numerous to be effectually defended, and that a certain number of these fortresses, raised under different circumstances, might be demolished."

Let us make careful note of the terms and also of the date of this protocol; the 17th of April, 1831—that is to say, before the original treaty of June. From this moment, at a time when the change in the text which disturbs M. Norden so much was not yet introduced; when the Belgian army had not yet suffered the reverses which, according to M. Norden would have been necessary to call the attention of the plenipotentiaries to the fact that the army of a country of four million inhabitants would never be in a position to offer a serious resistance to the armies of France; while nothing yet existed diplomatically beyond the very clear declarations of the Conference in favour of the complete neutrality of Belgium—what did the four interested Powers decree? The destruction of all the fortresses, as France would have wished? No, but simply that it would be opportune to do away with a certain number of them.

It is, therefore, obvious that the idea of

maintaining a part of the barrier of 1815 in Belgium is neither closely nor remotely connected with the revision of the treaty of June.

If we now recall (see pp. 122 and 127) the repeated and emphatic declarations by which the Conference, in its protocols of the 20th of December, 1830, and of the 19th of February, 1831, affirmed in vindication of the rights of Europe, the absolute necessity laid upon Belgium, henceforth independent, to fulfil her share of the duties and obligations which her previous union with the Netherlands had made her contract, we can easily divine the attitude adopted by the four Powers with regard to Belgium. A certain number of the fortresses were to be maintained; in connection with these fortresses, the Netherlands had been responsible for certain charges determined by the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle: henceforth, Belgium would be substituted for the Netherlands in the relations with the four Powers as to the said fortresses.

This is exactly what took place. Negotiations ensued; Belgium and France came to an agreement to demolish Charleroi, Mons, Tournai, Ath, and Menin. In the interval, Holland had broken the armistice, France had intervened, the whole laboriously constructed edifice was threatened; latent jealousies and ambitions revived: "The day our troops crossed the frontier," wrote Talleyrand on the 17th of August, "that very day a reaction began in the English mind, of which the *Times* shows striking symptoms. This reaction has visibly spread; it threatens the present Cabinet essentially; it is becoming national" (*Mémoires*, tome iv., p. 270).

Belgium, on her side, was anxious; she sent a special plenipotentiary, General Count Gobelet d'Alviella to London; her problem was to prevent the charges which she was about to take over from the Netherlands in connection with the fortresses from being incompatible with the independence and the neutrality of the country (see Gobelet, *Des cinq grandes*

Puissances de l'Europe dans leurs rapports politiques et militaires avec la Belgique). In the course of the London negotiations, modifications were made in the Franco-Belgian project; notably, Philippeville and Marienbourg were substituted for Charleroi and Tournai as fortresses to be dismantled.

France became angry, her Government was much incensed by the thought which inspired the other four Courts; any appearance of a restoration of the defensive system of 1815 aroused great irritation on her part. King Louis-Philippe wrote to Talleyrand that he would never have accepted the perpetual neutrality of Belgium, if he had not thought that the fortresses raised in order to threaten France would be demolished (*Mémoires*, vol. iv., p. 364).

Finally, a solution was achieved. On the 14th of December, 1831, a special agreement, called "the Fortresses Convention" was signed, designating the fortresses to be dismantled and to be maintained; but fearing lest France's

vehement opposition should compromise the success of these laborious negotiations, the plenipotentiaries of the four Powers other than France did not insert in the Convention the article which might have aroused anger, and they made it the object of a secret clause,—to which Belgium perforce adhered, since she was substituted for the Netherlands.

It is this secret clause, the existence of which was disclosed in 1864, which is for M. Norden the nucleus of the romance he has constructed; here, we find, he claims sanction for the obligation of free passage imposed on Belgium. Now if we consult the text we perceive that it demonstrates the exact contrary: the secret clause liberates Belgium from every obligation incompatible with her neutrality. M. Norden refrains from giving this text: I reproduce it below, placing opposite it the text of the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle, which specified the charges imposed on the Netherlands, and underlining its essential passages.

SECRET CLAUSE

"It is well understood that H. M. the King of the Belgians succeeds to all the rights which H. M. the King of the Netherlands exercised over the fortresses raised, repaired, or extended in Belgium wholly or in part at the expense of the Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, which must be maintained in virtue of the patent clause of this day. It is likewise understood that with regard to these fortresses H. M. the King of the Belgians is placed in

PROTOCOL OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

"The plenipotentiaries then discussed the means of furnishing these fortresses with the necessary garrisons, in the event of war taking place and of the war extending into the Netherlands and, seeing that the military establishments of this kingdom were never formed for the exclusive defence of a country whose defence concerns all the Powers to so great a degree, it has been agreed to recommend to His Majesty the

the position in which the King of the Netherlands was towards the four above named Courts, *save for the obligations which the perpetual neutrality of Belgium will impose upon* H. M. the King of the Belgians and upon the four Courts themselves.

Consequently in case the security of the fortresses in question should unfortunately be compromised, H. M. the King of the Belgians would *take, in concert* with the Courts of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia, the *casus fœderis* having been declared, to cause the fortresses of Ostend, Nieuport, Ypres, and those situated upon the Scheldt with the exception of the citadel of Tournai and the fortified city of Antwerp, to be occupied by the troops of His Britannic Majesty, and the citadels of Huy, Namur, and Dinant, as well as the fortified towns of Charleroi, Marienbourg, and Philippeville by the troops of His Prussian Majesty."

sia, *all the measures required for the preservation of his fortresses, always under the reserve of the neutrality of Belgium.*"

The differences are at once apparent.

Henceforth, among the obligations of the Netherlands which will devolve on Belgium, only such as are compatible with Belgian neutrality are to come in question; consequently, *the idea of having the strongholds occupied by Prussia and England is explicitly given up and nothing more is said* than that the King of the Belgians "will take in concert with the four Powers all the measures required for the preservation of the fortresses" . . . and that again, not in the event of a common war against France (*casus fœderis*), but in case "the security of the fortresses should unfortunately be compromised." I may note the characteristic fact, that at the moment of signing on behalf

of Belgium, General Gobelet addressed to the four plenipotentiaries a memorandum which made these points clear; the plenipotentiaries acknowledged the receipt of it in a special protocol.

To sum up: It was not after the invasion of Belgium by Holland that the question of the fortresses was raised; it was in conformity with the constant declarations of the Conference.

At the time of the abridged version of November, 1831, there was no idea of reviving an ancient clause, which, it is suggested, it had been intended, in June, to leave in oblivion; for in the month of April its adaptation to the new *régime* of Belgium had already been provided for;

Far from wishing to weaken the guarantee of the complete neutrality of Belgium by any condition making the eventual violation of the territory possible, the Powers expressly and categorically subordinated all measures what-

ever concerning the fortresses to respect for this neutrality;

Not only did the Fortresses Convention and its secret clause give Germany no right to occupy a square millimetre of Belgium, but all allusion to occupation had been suppressed in that same secret clause;

Far from laying upon Belgium an obligation of a right of way, the arrangements of November, 1831, definitely sanctioned Belgium's political status, as *an independent, perpetually neutral, perpetually inviolable State, guaranteed in her independence, her neutrality, and her inviolability by the formal engagement of the five Powers.*

Such is the testimony of history—that "*grande indiscrète*" as M. Norden says.

It must still be explained, in order to be complete, how it came about that, on the 15th of November, 1831, the Conference of London adopted a different text from that of the 26th of June.

No document, no diplomatic report author-

izes us to presume that this modification was intentional; it appears to have been due merely to the choice of words adopted for the final version.

As a matter of fact, the formula upon which the agreement between the plenipotentiaries had been established on the 26th of June, 1831 (Treaty of the Eighteen Articles), was evidently inspired by that which, in the Treaty of Vienna of the 20th of November, 1815, had recognized the neutrality of Switzerland, claimed by the delegates of that country as a national tradition.

In 1815, it had been stated:

"The Powers make a formal and authentic recognition of the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland and they guarantee her integrity and inviolability within her new boundaries. The Powers recognize authentically that the neutrality and the inviolability of Switzerland and her independence of all foreign influence are in the true interests of the policy of all Europe."

In 1831 it was stated:

"ART. 9.—Belgium, within her boundaries such as they will be traced conformably to the principles laid down in the present preliminaries, will form a perpetually neutral State. The five Powers, without wishing to interfere with Belgium's domestic form of government, guarantee her this perpetual neutrality, as well as the integrity and inviolability of her territory within the boundaries mentioned in the present article."

There is nothing surprising in this analogy: one of the chief artificers of the neutralization of Belgium, Talleyrand, always had in view, as I recalled above (p. 130), to place Belgium in the same position as Switzerland as regards the effects of her neutrality in the political system of Europe.

But five months later, in November, the treaty had to be submitted to a general revision, because the Netherlands refused to sanction it, notably by reason of the territorial sacrifices

it imposed upon her. In this revision, Article 9 disappeared as an autonomous article, and the stipulations which it set forth became the subject of two new articles, namely:

"ART. 7.—Belgium, within the limits specified in Art. 1, 2, and 4, shall form a perpetually neutral independent State. She shall be bound to observe this neutrality towards all other States."

. . . . . .

"ART. 25.—The Courts of Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia guarantee to H. M. the King of the Belgians the execution of all the preceding articles.

In the new version care was evidently taken to affirm that the guarantee given by the Powers to Belgium applied to the whole of the stipulations, that it covered all the aspects, all the attributes of the new State; its sovereignty, its independence, its neutrality, its boundaries; with this intention, the guaranteeing clause

was placed at the end of the text (Article 25), and the formula of the beginning, which was inspired by the precedent of 1815, was abandoned. It would have been practically impossible to introduce, in the new wording, the expression "inviolable" in Article 7, for inviolability can only be evoked at the moment when the question of guaranteeing it is under discussion; inviolability does not exist in itself, it cannot be, like neutrality and independence, a special attribute of a State; we cannot, therefore, think of Art. 7 drawn up as follows: "Belgium shall form an independent State, *inviolable*, and perpetually neutral." On the other hand, it was superfluous to introduce the expression "inviolable" in Art. 25, for there was no shadow of a reason for placing this particular aspect of the sovereignty of the new State in a conspicuous light in this article, since *all* the articles of the treaty were expressly guaranteed, without excepting those which traced the boundaries of the territory; now, what does guaranteeing

boundaries mean, if not guaranteeing their inviolability at the same time? The version of November, therefore, appears to be quite equivalent to that of June.

Of the whole of M. Norden's exposition, then, literally nothing remains, but a lamentable attempt to sow distrust among the Belgians amidst whom he dwells, and doubt among the neutrals, who make their sympathies for Belgium dependent on the certainty that the violation of her neutrality was in fact an act contrary to formal engagements sanctioned by treaties.

LAST WORDS

Among the accusations persistently brought against Belgium, there are some so puerile that we feel a sort of embarrassment in having to refute them. We are disconcerted by a publication like that of Dr. Grasshoff (*Belgiens Schuld*, quoted above, p. 76) in which the claims of logic and good sense are absolutely ignored.

In order to prove that "Belgium had violated her neutrality long before a single German soldier had trodden her soil" (p. 6), Dr. Grasshoff contents himself, he says, "with two facts so important as to defy all casuistry" (p. 7). I have already dealt with the first: the grievance against the Belgian Government of having favoured England with a monopoly of military information (see p. 77 *et seq.*). Here is the second: "Before the obligatory entrance of

the German troops into Belgium, on the 4th of August, 1914, this country had already opened her frontiers to the French . . . the *proofs* in this connection," says the author," are *conclusive*" (pp. 7 and 11). What are these proofs?

A German, residing in Belgium as a shopkeeper and a workman, saw two French officers and one English officer at Brussels on Sunday, the 26th of July; on the 29th of July he met eight French soldiers and "heard it stated that they were artillerymen"; between the 29th of July and the 2d of August, he saw an aëroplane over Brussels, "it was a French biplane according to his supposition; he believed so because in 1910 he saw many French machines at the Brussels aviation competition" (p. 12). Two persons, whose names are not given, declare that "according to the inhabitants of three Belgian localities in the region to the north of Lille, the mobilization of the Belgian army was proclaimed in the villages as early as the 30th of July, 1914, and that French patrols crossed the

frontier on the 1st of August in order to join the Belgian patrols (p. 13). A French soldier, now a prisoner, of the 8th Hussars, deposed that his regiment had crossed the Belgian frontier on the 2d of August, taking the direction of Bouillon (p. 14); another of the 21st Dragoons without fixing any date, says that he entered Belgium on the morrow of the French mobilization (*id.*); a third, of the 28th Dragoons, certifies that the frontier was crossed on the 31st of July in the evening (p. 15). I take no notice of the inoffensive information of a Belgian newspaper, which confined itself to announcing on the 30th of July "important movements of French troops that day at the frontier, as well as the departure of seven special military trains which left Charleville on the 28th of July in the direction of the frontier" (p. 17).

I have already replied to the declarations of civilians concerning the presence of French officers and soldiers in the streets of Brussels before the 3d of August, 1914 (*La Belgique*

neutre et loyale, p. 143 to 147), and I then concluded in these terms: "I do not wish to affirm that the witnesses whose declarations are reported did not say what they believed to be the truth: various facts which are known to me incline me rather to the belief that mistakes were made" (p. 146). There have been, in fact, more than mistakes: the French Government has taken the trouble to have precise information collected at Brussels, Liège, and Namur, which proves that "the testimonies invoked swarm with gross errors and more or less voluntary inaccuracies" (see *Grey Book*, ii., No. 118, 2d and 3d Annexes).

The question of the presence of French military men in the streets of certain Belgian towns before the hostilities is now settled: it would be puerile to revert to it.

But, among the declarations reported by Dr. Grasshoff, there are three which have, I know, produced a real impression in neutral countries: I refer to the assertions of the three French

soldiers now prisoners in Germany. I am now in a position to reply to these.

The Grand Headquarters Staff of the French armies of the East has had the kindness to state, at my request, in a formal and decisive manner, which were the actual stations of the French units accused of having crossed the Belgian frontier before the appeal made by Belgium, on the 4th of August, to the military aid of the guaranteeing nations. The report of the Grand Headquarters Staff, which I reproduce farther on, first of all recalls the orders given at the beginning of the campaign by the French military authorities in obedience to the instructions of the Government of the Republic.

On the 4th of August, the Minister of War wrote:

"Germany is going to attempt to incite us to violate Belgian neutrality by means of false news. *Our soldiers are rigorously and in the most formal manner forbidden, until a contrary order be given, to penetrate, even as patrols or*

simply as horsemen, into the territory of Belgium, and all aviators are likewise forbidden to fly over this territory. A contrary order will moreover be given only when the Grand Headquarters Staff have come to an understanding with the Belgian Government.—Signed: *Messimy.*"

It was on the 5th of August only *after an understanding with the Belgian Government,* that the General in Chief *authorized reconnoitring parties of cavalry to penetrate into Belgian territory,* and ordered them to conduct themselves there as in a friendly and allied country.

Finally, it was *on the same day, the 5th of August, at 7* P.M., that orders were given by the General in Chief to the cavalry corps (region of Charleville) and to the . . .th division of cavalry (region of Mangiennes), to cross the frontier *the following day, the 6th of August* and to take the direction of Neufchâteau.[1]

[1] The note addressed by Germany to the Belgian Government dates from the 2d of August; the violation of Belgian territory by the German troops and Belgium's appeal to the Allied Powers took place on the 4th of August.

But there is more: an examination of the declarations invoked by Dr. Grasshoff brings to light, as we shall see, inexactitudes of dates, confusions of names and errors of fact which definitively deprive them of all value. I will let the Grand Headquarters Staff speak for itself:

The trooper, Julien Requet, of the 8th Regiment of Hussars, is said to have stated that his regiment, which arrived at La Neuville-aux-Tourneurs in the night of the 31st of July to the 1st of August, stayed there two days, then proceeded to Donchéry, and thence to Bouillon; according to Requet, it crossed the frontier "on the 2d of August, 1914, about 5 P.M. At Bouillon, the 8th Hussars, he says, joined the 3d Regiment of Hussars, as well as the 21st and 27th Dragoons, who crossed the frontier, we are told" about the same time.

The division to which the 8th Hussars belonged formed part of the cavalry corps. This

division did in fact arrive at its concentration quarters (region of Aubenton-Rumigny), in the morning of the 1st of August, *but it remained there during the 2d, 3rd, and 4th of August.*

In particular, the light brigade, to which the 8th Hussars belonged, camped during these three days in the region of Girondelle, Foulzy, Cuvillers, La Neuville-aux-Tourneurs (S. W. of Rocroi).

According to the declarations of trooper Requet, this brigade then marched upon Donchéry; this march took place on the *5th of August;* in the evening of the 5th of August, it camped in the Donchéry, Dancourt, Vrigne-sur-Meuse zone.

It was *during the day of the 6th of August* that the brigade proceeded from Donchéry to Bouillon by Saint-Menges and Corbion; *it was therefore on the morning of that day and not on the 2d of August that the frontier was crossed.*

The 3d Hussars, to which allusion is made in trooper Requet's declaration, formed a bri-

gade with the 8th Hussars; it halted and moved together with this regiment from the *1st to the 6th of August.*

As to the 23d and 27th Dragoons, they formed part of another division of the cavalry corps, which left the region of Charleville on the *6th of August*, and that day proceeded towards Paliseul viâ Givonne and Bouillon, *thus crossing the Belgian frontier on the very same date as the 8th Hussars.*

Trooper Requet may have really met these regiments at Bouillon, *but not on the date which he indicates.*

To sum up, Trooper Requet has reported facts which appear to be correct, *but the dates of which are erroneous.*

Besides, certain points in this declaration are ambiguous; if his regiment arrived at La Neuville in the night of the 31st of July to the 1st of August, and stayed there "two days," if it then marched towards Donchéry (50 kilometres) and afterwards to Bouillon, how was

it able to penetrate into Belgium on the 2d of August?

Trooper Bailly of the 21st Dragoons is said to have declared that on the morrow of the day when the mobilization was announced at Hirson, his regiment had left its covering quarters (region of Bossus) and had crossed the Belgian frontier in order to reach Bouillon the same day. The 5th Dragoons and several regiments of Cuirassiers, seen by trooper Bailly at Bouillon, had, according to him, crossed the frontier on the same date. These regiments would consequently have penetrated into Belgium on the 2d of August.

The 21st and the 5th Dragoons constituted a brigade belonging to the same division as the 8th Hussars, referred to above. As the whole division moved forward at the same time, what has been said with regard to the 8th Hussars applies in a general manner to the 21st and 3d Dragoons.

Having arrived at its covering positions on the *1st of August*, this brigade camped on the *1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th* of August in the region of Aubenton, Hannapes, Bossus-les-Rumigny, Antheny.

On the 5th it moved towards Donchéry at the same time as the brigade of Hussars and camped in the region of Vrigne-aux-Bois, Vivier-au-Court, Issancourt, Lumes, Villers. *On the 6th of August only*, it moved towards Bouillon under the same conditions as the brigade of Hussars.

Two errors must therefore be pointed out in Trooper Bailly's declarations:

An error of date: the 21st Dragoons did not leave its covering quarters on the morrow of the day when the mobilization must have been known at Hirson, but three days later (5th of August);

An error of fact: this regiment did not move directly from Bossus towards Bouillon, but towards Lumes, Vrignes-aux-Bois, Issancourt,

a region which it left on the next day, 6th of August, in order to proceed to Bouillon. The march of the 5th of August is forgotten in Trooper Bailly's deposition.

According to Trooper Cochard of the 28th Dragoons, the brigade formed by the 28th and 30th Dragoons left Sedan, its garrison, on the morning of the 31st of July, moved first of all towards Mouzon where it arrived towards midday, then proceeded in the evening of the same day via Bazelles and La Chapelle to Bouillon, where the 28th Dragoons had arrived, according to him, on the 31st of July at 10 o'clock in the evening.

On the following day, the 1st of August, he declares that the brigade went from Bouillon towards Arlon via Florenville, Belle-Fontaine, and Sainte-Marie, "having on the 1st of August covered more than forty kilometres in the direction of the east, exclusively upon Belgian territory."

The 28th Dragoons, he declares, camped in the evening of the 1st of August at Saint-Laurent near Arlon.

Between Bouillon and Florenville, the brigade is said to have met the 4th Hussars and the 3d and 6th Cuirassiers in Belgian territory.

This declaration, which would tend to show that the whole of the division to which the 28th Dragoons belonged was in Belgian territory as early as the 1st of August, is untrue in every particular.

As a matter of fact the brigade constituted by the 28th and 30th Dragoons did really leave Sedan on the 31st of July by the Mouzon high-road, but it pursued its route via Stenay and Jametz in order to reach its covering quarters upon the Othain. The squadron to which Trooper Cochard belonged was actually stopped on its way at Mouzon in order to wait there for the arrival of the mounted group of the division coming from Charleville, and escort it to its destination. But it continued its journey,

with this group, in the evening of the 31st of July, and came to camp at Stenay. On the following morning, it rejoined the division in its quarters. This squadron did not return towards Sedan on the day when it left its garrison, any more than did the bulk of the regiment.

The brigade arrived upon the Othain on the 31st of July towards 10 o'clock. The 28th Dragoons camped at Saint-Laurent-sur-Authin (18 kilometres S. E. of Montmédy) the third Dragoons at Pillon (5 kilometres S. E. of Saint Laurent).

These two regiments did not leave their encampments till the morning of the 6th of August; during the whole of this period the outposts did not go beyond the Othain. On the 6th of August the division set forward and penetrated into Belgium by Montmédy, Thouelle, Avioth, Fagny, Belle-Fontaine. The 28th Dragoons formed the vanguard of the division and at the end of the march took up the outposts upon the Semoy at Breuvanne (15 kilometres N. of

Virton); the 30th Dragoons camped at Tintigny (S. E. of Breuvanne).

The two regiments of Cuirassiers which Trooper Cochard claimed to have met on the 1st of August between Bouillon and Florenville were on this date encamped upon the Othain.

The 3d Cuirassiers did indeed leave Vouziers, its garrison, in the afternoon of the 31st of July and came to camp that day at Brieulles-sur-Meuse (5 kilometres S. of Dun). On the following day it proceeded to Mangiennes in the Woevre, where it remained *till the morning of the 6th of August, the date on which it advanced into Belgium* at Jamoigne (10 kilometres E. of Florenville) by the same route as the 28th and 30th Dragoons.

As to the 6th Cuirassiers, they moved forward under similar conditions.

Leaving Sainte-Menehould, on the 31st of July they came to camp at Consenvoye (15 kilometres N. of Verdun) and proceeded on the following day, the 1st of August, to Billy-sous-

Mangiennes (7 kilometres E. of Spincourt) where they remained until the 6th of August. *On the 6th of August, they followed the 3d Cuirassiers in their march towards the Belgian frontier.*

It is therefore untrue that the 3d and 6th Cuirassiers were on Belgian territory between Bouillon and Florenville on the morning of the 1st of August.

To sum up: *Trooper Cochard's narrative is not in accordance with facts on any point, except as to the date on which his regiment left its garrison and the direction it took on leaving.*

The account abounds in confusions of dates and of names: Saint-Laurent-sur-Othain becomes Saint-Laurent near d'Arlon, which does not exist. A certain number of localities, quoted at random from recollection, mark the route traced by Trooper Cochard for his brigade on the 1st of August: "Sainte Cécile, where the regiment camped on the 8th of August, Chassepierre traversed the same day, Florenville and Pin traversed or seen almost every

day from the 6th to the 18th of August; Saint-Vincent, occupied by the 28th Dragoons on the 7th of August; Belle-Fontaine upon the march of the entry into Belgium on the 6th of August" (Report of the Colonel commanding the 28th Dragoons).

Further, we find in Trooper Cochard's declarations facts invented in all their details; thus the Bazeilles–La Chapelle–Bouillon route by which, according to him, the 28th Dragoons penetrated into Belgium is 25 kilometres distant from that really followed by this regiment (Montmédy–Avioth–Belle-Fontaine).

Further, the cantonment occupied, according to him by his regiment at Bouillon in the evening of the 31st of July, cannot be attributed to a confusion on his part, for "never at any moment did a unit of the 28th Dragoons stay at Bouillon or go through this town" (Report of the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 28th Dragoons).

The same may be said of the route also imagined by him—and in a very precise man-

ner—for the march of his regiment on the 1st of August from Bouillon to Arlon, etc.

Cochard's declarations would moreover be suspect even were they not contradicted by the facts.

The information furnished as to this Trooper by his corps-commander is, in fact, bad: "A mediocre soldier, of limited intelligence, of a rude nature, and a very independent and sullen character; Cochard answered exactly to the poacher type of the man of the woods, which he boasted of being."

The inaccuracy of his information applied even to his functions: employed as a cyclist in the 3d squadron of the 28th Dragoons, he was never on horseback in the ranks, as he implies (§1–6–7 of his declaration).

It is important to add that his disappearance on the 22d of August has remained suspicious, and gave rise to the most unfavourable interpretations of his conduct on the part of his superiors.

It would be superfluous to add a word to

an account, so full of facts and of so grave a character.

Dr. Grasshoff's "convincing" proofs have been abundantly utilized by our accusers: They found in them an unhoped for justification of their imputation that Belgium had prematurely opened her frontiers to the French troops. Since they insist, I will now bring forward a fact which will doubtless reduce them to silence.

The plan of concentration of the Belgian army in the event of mobilization, that is to say, the ordering of the positions to be occupied by the different units on the eve of a conflict, had been fixed in 1913, at the time of the military reorganization. Now, in this plan, how had the positions of concentration of the Belgian forces been chosen? The official report of the army command (*The Action of the Belgian army from the 31st of July to the 31st of December, 1914*, Chapelot, Paris, 1915) replies in formal

terms (p. 2 and see the sketch on the opposite page).

"The positions of concentration had been chosen with a view to ensuring the defence of the territory, while strictly conforming to the obligations imposed on Belgium by her neutrality, as defined by the treaties of 1839.

"In fact (apart from the 2d and 6th divisions and the cavalry division, which remained at Antwerp and Brussels), the 1st, 3d, 4th, and 5th divisions filled the rôle of vanguard divisions and were placed respectively in each of the directions from which danger could threaten Belgium:

"The 1st Division, or Flanders division, faced England;

"The 3d Division, or Liège division, faced Germany;

"The 4th and 5th Divisions, looked towards France, the 4th being destined to face an attack upon Namur, the 5th an attack which should debouch from Maubeuge-Lille.

PRUSSE RHENANE
GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Verviers
Liège
Tongres
Hasselt
Wavre
Nivelles
Louvain
BRUXELLES
Namur
Ath
Alost
Audenarde
Termonde
Gand
Mons
Tournai
Lille
Ypres
Bruges
Ostende
Dunkerque
Maubeuge
Charleroi
Sambre
Meuse
Escaut
Lys
Canal de Mons à Condé
Canal de Nimy à Blaton
Canal de Pommerœul à Antoing
Canal de Charleroi à Bruxelles
Canal de Bruxelles à Willebroek
Canal de Willebroek à Rupelmonde
Canal de Gand à Terneuzen
Canal de Gand à Bruges
Canal de Bruges à Ostende
Canal de Bruges à Zeebrugge
Canal de Zelzate à Selzaete
Canal de Gand à Ostende
Canal de Gand à Deynze
Canal de Deynze à Schipdonck
Canal de Schipdonck à Terneuzen
Canal de Terneuzen à Gand
Canal de Gand à Bruxelles
Canal de Bruxelles à Charleroi
Canal de Charleroi à Namur
Canal de Namur à Liège
Canal de Liège à Maastricht
Canal de Liège à Hasselt
Canal de Hasselt à Bocholt
Canal de Bocholt à Herentals
Canal de Herentals à Bois-le-Duc
Canal de Bois-le-Duc à Maastricht
Canal de Maastricht à Bois-le-Duc
Canal de Bois-le-Duc à Wilhelmina
Canal de Wilhelmina à Zuid-Willemsvaart
Canal de Zuid-Willemsvaart à Maastricht
Canal de Maastricht à Liège
Canal de Liège à Meuse
Canal de Meuse à Escaut
Canal de Meuse à Escaut
Canal de Meuse à Escaut

"Each of these vanguard divisions was entrusted with the task of furnishing the first resistance and, by this very resistance, of giving time to transport the other five divisions to the threatened part of the territory.

"Belgium's defensive system included, besides, three fortified towns: Antwerp, constituting an entrenched camp and place of refuge, Liège and Namur serving as halting places, bridge-heads, and supporting points: the army had therefore to be divided into garrison troops and field troops; out of the fifteen militia classes called to the colours, the last seven were reserved for the service of the fortresses, and the first eight were assigned to the army in the field."

Such were the arrangements already prescribed before the war. They were strictly observed at the moment of the mobilization and, on the morning of the 1st of August, the musterings were effected as indicated upon the sketch.

Now—and here we come to the decisive fact —*the concentration was not modified* after the Belgian Government had received Germany's note demanding a free passage for her troops, on Sunday the 2d of August, at 7 o'clock in the evening, that is to say, the four vanguard divisions kept their respective positions, one facing England, two facing France (two, because of the extent of the frontier on that side), *one only facing Germany*. We read in fact in the official report:

"The German Note of the 2d of August, it must be remarked, had no immediate influence upon the concentration of the army, which remained disposed upon the territory according to the military exigencies imposed by the neutrality of the country; orders were given to the posts placed at *all* the frontiers, *to open fire on any foreign troops entering Belgium.*"

And the report adds: "This attitude of the high command reflected faithfully the political attitude adopted by the King's Government;

the latter had, in fact, replied to the German Note, on the one hand, that it would repel by all the means in its power any attack made by Germany on Belgium's rights; on the other hand, that if, contrary to all expectation, a violation of Belgian neutrality should be committed by France, Belgium would carry out all her international duties, and that her army would offer the most vigorous resistance to the invader."

It was only in the night of the 3d to the 4th of August, when it had become certain that the German troops meant to cross Belgium by force, that the Commander-in-Chief ordered the execution of the measures made necessary by the new situation.

"*Then only*," states the report, "orders were given to destroy the great artificial works upon the lines of communication susceptible of being utilized by the German troops. The military governors of the provinces were warned henceforth *not to consider the movements of French*

troops on Belgian territory as acts of violation of neutrality.

"Conformably to the plan of defence, the 3d Division was to resist the enemy, supported by the fortified position of Liège; under its protection, the other divisions were to proceed in the direction of the invader, with the exception, however, of the Namur Division (the 4th), which was entrusted with the protection of this fortress; the 1st Division was directed from Ghent to Tirlemont, the 2d from Antwerp to Louvain; the 5th from Mons to Perwez; the 6th from Brussels to Wavre. These transports were to be covered: 1st, by the cavalry division, which, concentrated at Gembloux, was to proceed to Waremme; 2d, by a mixed brigade of the 3d Division, directed toward Tongres; 3d, by a mixed brigade of the 4th Division sent to Huy.

"The concentration movements, begun on the 1st of August, ended on the following day; they were carried out with rapidity and regularity, partly by road, partly by railway.

"The King, by virtue of the constitution, assumed the supreme command of the army.

"On the 6th of August, in the morning, the army was ready to move forward with all its convoys."

In view of these facts, I say to our accusers: when we consider a little country suddenly drawn into a conflict the stake of which was the loss of its independence; when we see, that at the moment when it was no longer a question of adopting political attitudes which are prone to be disregarded, but of taking resolutions which endanger the life of a nation, it remained so completely faithful to its obligations and so absolutely free from all foreign tutelage, that it organized its supreme defence from the one and single point of view of its own interests—then, if we deny it the homage of esteem which we owe to all who do their duty, we should pass on and be silent.

It is unnecessary for me to return to the question of the conduct of the German troops in

Belgium and to the alleged popular war (*Volkskrieg*) which they say they had to repress. *A White Book*, of more than three hundred pages (*Die völkerrechtswidrige Führung des belgischen Volkskriegs*), has been devoted to this. Dr. Grasshoff was among those who collected the depositions gathered together in it. It is that which has enabled him to reserve for these matters four-fifths of the pamphlet to which I have referred above.

I will confine myself here to one single remark, as the German *White Book* is to be the object of a detailed refutation from Belgium in the near future.

In the official German message to the President of the United States on the 14th of August, it was stated:

"The Belgian Government has publicly encouraged the civil population to make war and it had long ago organized this participation."

Dr. Grasshoff now takes upon himself, by publishing a certain number of documents

emanating from the Belgian authorities, to show the utter lack of foundation for this incredible accusation: the royal decree calling the non-active Civic Guard to service (p. 43), the circulars of the Home Secretary (*id.*), of the Governor of Brabant (p. 48), of the Commander-in-Chief of the Civic Guard of the provinces of Antwerp and of Brabant (p. 45), the depositions of Belgian notables (p. 46–47), or of burgomasters (p. 51), all the official documents, including the facsimiles of administrative telegrams, which Dr. Grasshoff has collected, confirm without any possible doubt the thing so evident to every fair-minded person: the Belgian Government, from the first hours, took all the measures in its power *to ensure the passivity of the population* (see *La Belgique neutre et loyale*, p. 197–229).

The population was hostile! the press was impassioned! cries Dr. Grasshoff. Whose fault was that? I ask. The accusation treats lightly the only two facts which count, namely, first

of all the indignation—this is the only word for it—felt by all Belgians on Monday the 3d of August, when they learned that Germany, not satisfied with violating a formal engagement, threatened them with the loss of their independence if they were not willing to act in a manner contrary to their duty and to their vital interests; then the horror—the word is not strong enough—which these same Belgians felt after the 6th of August, when they heard of the first reprisals of the German troops in Belgium.

As to all the depositions of Germans, collected by Germans, which the *White Book* marshals to prove that shots were fired by Belgians on the German troops, they are valueless as evidence, devoid of probative force: quite recently, a strictly scientific examination, based upon the German sources alone, has shown how the stories which are at the bottom of these testimonies depend for their existence upon legend, and were slowly elaborated to

suit leading themes, from slight incidents, disfigured and exaggerated in the course of transmission (see Van Langenhove: *Comment nait un Cycle de Légendes; Franc-tireurs et Atrocités en Belgique*, 1916). Then again we must plead for a suspension of judgment: *audiatur et altera pars!* Belgians subject to the occupier might reply, but they cannot make themselves heard.

But we may, nevertheless, even now ask the readers of the *White Book* or of Dr. Grasshoff's pamphlet, if they have found anywhere in these a justification or an excuse for the method of collective reprisals.

"*No collective penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, may be decreed against the populations by reason of individual acts for which they could not be considered as collectively responsible.*"

This all the nations, including Germany, had decided at the second Hague Conference.

Throughout the month of August, 1914, a system of war exactly the reverse of this

prescription was let loose upon my country. It was *der schneidig geführte Krieg*, war carried on in trenchant fashion, which General von Hartmann had but recently opposed to war carried on with some consideration for humanity.

For all those who think that, even when war is raging, humanity and equity retain their rights, this system is execrable. No apology for it has yet been attempted. No apology will be attempted. It belongs to those things which are done, but which are spoken of only to be condemned.

And now I conclude.

For eighteen months innocent Belgium has been suffering, in expiation of misdeeds which she never committed and of which her enemies accused her only after having struck her, in order to justify themselves to the world: if there are still in Germany men who have the courage to imagine fresh grievances against her, let

them speak! They will not wear out the patience of the Belgians, nor their determination to defend their patrimony of honour and of loyalty.

THE END

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